ACTION TOOL A:
Understanding Learning Targets

What Is a Learning Target?

The most effective teaching and the most meaningful student learning happen when teachers design the right learning target for today's lesson and use it along with their students to aim for and assess understanding.

A learning target describes, in language that students understand, the lesson-sized chunk of information, skills, and reasoning processes that students will come to know deeply and thoroughly.

How Does a Learning Target Differ from an Instructional Objective?

An *instructional objective* describes an intended outcome and the nature of evidence that will determine mastery of that outcome from a teacher's point of view. It contains content outcomes, conditions, and criteria.

A *learning target* describes the intended lesson-sized learning outcome and the nature of evidence that will determine mastery of that outcome from a student's point of view. It contains the immediate learning aims for today's lesson.

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

Checklist for Evaluating Learning Targets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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MATHEMATICS EXAMPLE	To focus and direct learning, you need:		
	Content outcome	**Conditions**	**Criteria**
	Knowledge and/or skills a student should be able to demonstrate	Circumstances under which students will be able to perform	Qualities of performance by which you will know that the student has reached desired level of learning
Teacher's instructional objective for a set of lessons focused on teaching: 3-digit addition with carrying.	The student will be able to solve problems using 3-digit addition with carrying in the ones' place.	Without using calculators or fact charts.	The student will perform with 80 percent accuracy.
	What am I going to learn?	**How will I show what I know?**	**How will I know how well I am doing—what are my look-fors?**
Students' learning target for today's lesson on: Introducing carrying.	I am going to be able to use a method called "carrying" so that I know what to do with the 10 under 8+2 or the 12 under 9+3 in problems like these: 438 219 +152 +363	I will use a paper and pencil and show my work as I solve the problems.	I can explain and show how to put the carrying marks in the right places as I solve the problems (most of the time). My work will look like this example: $\begin{array}{r} 2\,1\\ 219\\ +363\\ \hline 582 \end{array}$
Students' learning target for another day's lesson on: Practicing for accuracy and proficiency.	I am going to be able to use carrying to solve problems like these accurately and smoothly: 438 219 +152 +363	I will use a paper and pencil and show my work as I solve the problems.	I can put the carrying marks in the right places and use them to get the correct answers (most of the time).
Students' learning target for yet another day's lesson on: Identifying relevant problems.	I am going to be able to write my own story problems that need 3-digit addition with carrying as part of their solution.	I will create stories from my own classroom or home or shopping.	I can write three story problems that need 3-digit addition with carrying as part of their solution [depending on the lesson, may add "and I can solve them correctly"].
COUNTEREXAMPLE: NOT a learning target for today's lesson	I can do 3-digit addition with carrying in the ones' place to solve problems. [NOTE: This is not one lesson-sized chunk, and it is mostly in teacher language, just with an "I can" stuck on at the beginning.]	Without using calculators or fact charts.	I will get at least a B on my quiz. [NOTE: This criterion is about scoring, not showing learning. It is not shared as a student look-for.]

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

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ACTION TOOL B:
Learning Target Classroom Walk-Through Guide

PURPOSE: To help school leaders "look for," recognize, and analyze what is actually happening in today's lesson to promote effective teaching, meaningful learning, and increased student achievement.

Suggestions for Use

- **For an individual school leader:** Use the action tool to focus a walk-through or classroom visit or as a reflective framework to begin a formative conversation with the teacher about the observation.
- **For a professional learning community of school leaders:** Each leader performs an analysis of a classroom visit using the entire action tool or part of it, depending on the learning focus. Then leaders compare, discuss, and analyze their findings as individuals and as a leadership team. Use findings to plan for long-term and short-term professional learning goals and professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders.

Directions

Use the checklist to focus your observation on what students are *actually* doing during today's lesson to aim for understanding and what the teacher is doing to help them achieve. The checklist focuses on the relationship among the three essential elements of a formative learning cycle: the learning target and success criteria, the performance of understanding, and feedback that feeds learning forward. Only when these relationships are in place are you operating with a learning target theory of action.

LEARNING TARGET: A description of what the student is going to learn by the end of today's lesson, stated in developmentally appropriate language that the student can understand and aim for during today's lesson. Learning target language is framed from the point of view of a student who has not yet mastered the target and includes student look-fors—criteria that students can use to judge how close they are to the target, stated in language that describes mastery rather than grading or scoring. The learning target is connected to the specific performance of understanding for today's lesson.

STUDENT LOOK-FORS: A student-friendly term that teachers use to describe success criteria. Look-fors are stated in feed-forward language that sets students up to use the criteria for self-assessment, self-regulation, and goal setting.

SUCCESS CRITERIA: Descriptions of what it means to do quality work in today's lesson in terms that are lesson-sized, observable, and measurable, so that students can use them to assess the quality of their work while they are learning. The criteria explain what good work (success) looks like for today's lesson to help students understand what they will be asked to do to demonstrate their learning and how well they will be asked to do it. Success criteria are specific to the learning target, understandable, and visible.

PERFORMANCE OF UNDERSTANDING: A learning experience or task that requires students to actually do, say, write, or make something during today's lesson to aim for the target, apply the success criteria, deepen their understanding, and produce compelling evidence of what they know and can do related to the target.

FEEDBACK THAT FEEDS FORWARD: Feedback that compares student work with the learning target for the lesson, describes student thinking, suggests a specific strategy for next steps, arrives during the performance of understanding (or as close to it as possible), and uses student-friendly, developmentally appropriate language.

Learning Target Classroom Walk-Through Guide

Principal's name: _____

Grade level: _____ **Duration of lesson (hours/minutes):** _____

Subject: _____ **Topic:** _____

1. Did you see evidence that the teacher had a learning target for this specific lesson (not a learning target for a series of lessons)?

☐ **Yes, I saw evidence that the teacher had a specific learning target** for today's lesson—a statement of what the students would be able to do or come to know as a result of today's lesson.

☐ **No. However, I saw evidence that the teacher had an instructional objective** that was used to guide teaching and that could have covered more than one lesson.

☐ **No, I could not find evidence that the teacher had a learning target** for the lesson, nor was there evidence of an instructional objective.

Describe what you observed—the evidence you gathered to support your response:

2. What did you actually see the students do, say, write, or make during today's lesson? Did you find evidence that the lesson included a strong performance of understanding? In other words, if the students completed everything that the teacher asked them to do, would you have compelling evidence that the students had achieved the learning target for today's lesson?

☐ **Definitely!** The teacher asked the students to engage in an activity that deepened their understanding of the learning target's essential content and skills, encouraged students to use reasoning, required them to apply the success criteria to their own work, and produced compelling evidence of where students were in relation to the learning target.

☐ **Basically.** The teacher asked students to engage in an activity that was related to the learning target but produced only general evidence of where students were in relation to the learning target.

☐ **No.** The students were engaged in an activity, but it was not a performance of understanding. The teacher asked students to engage in an activity that was either unrelated to the learning target or produced little evidence of where students were in relation to the learning target.

Describe what you observed—the evidence you gathered to support your response:

3. In addition to looking for a strong performance of understanding, did you see evidence that the teacher shared the learning target for the lesson with the students in any of the following additional ways?

Check all that apply. Below each item checked, describe exactly what you observed—the evidence you gathered to support your choices.

☐ The teacher shared the target verbally.

☐ The teacher asked students to put the target into their own words or explain the target to a friend.

☐ The teacher used a visual (picture, chart, SMART Board, or student handout).

☐ The teacher referred to the learning target throughout the lesson, helping students self-assess.

☐ The teacher shared examples of strong and weak work and gave students the chance to examine the characteristics of each.

☐ The teacher connected what the class was doing in today's lesson to what came before today's lesson and to what would be coming next in the unit.

4. Did you see evidence that the teacher shared student look-fors, or criteria for success, with students?

Check all that apply. Below each item checked, describe exactly what you observed—the evidence you gathered to support your choices.

☐ The teacher posted what students should look for in their work, phrased as simple, understandable "I can" statements.

☐ The teacher provided the students with a checklist of important elements for them to look for in their work. Students were given time to use the checklist.

☐ The teacher provided the students with a rubric that included both criteria and performance-level descriptions to look for in their work. Students were given a strategy for doing this (e.g., using highlighters, making notes on the rubric) and were given time to do it.

☐ The teacher co-constructed with students a rubric that included both criteria and performance-level descriptions to look for in their work. Students were given a strategy for doing this (e.g., using highlighters, making notes on the rubric) and were given time to do it.

☐ The teacher used examples of strong and weak work for students to use as comparisons with their own. (The examples could be on paper or, for performances, provided via demonstrations or modeling.) Students were given a strategy for comparing their work with the examples or models (e.g., using a rubric) and were given time to do it.

☐ The teacher organized qualities of good work into a series of questions to guide students' reasoning about the quality of their work (e.g., Do I have a strong thesis sentence that is worth writing about? Do I give more than one reason why my thesis is important?). The questions were available to students (e.g., on paper handouts or on the board), and students had time to consider and answer them.

5. Did you observe the teacher feeding students' learning forward during today's lesson? Did the teacher provide information that was timely, descriptive, and directly related to the learning target; describe where students were in relation to the success criteria; and suggest a strategy for success?

Check all that apply. Below each item checked, describe exactly what you observed—the evidence you gathered to support your choices.

☐ The teacher consistently provided feed-forward information that was related to the learning target and success criteria, described student thinking against the criteria, and suggested what students could do to improve.

☐ The teacher fed students' learning forward during the introductory part of the lesson, modeled and explained what was important to learn and be able to do, and described or demonstrated specific strategies for doing so.

☐ The teacher helped students set goals for the performance of understanding (what they would be asked to do to deepen understanding and demonstrate learning and how well they would have to do it).

☐ The teacher referred to the learning target and student look-fors during guided practice.

☐ As the teacher described what students would be asked to do during the performance of understanding, he or she explained specific strategies related to the learning target that students could use to improve their work.

☐ The teacher used written, verbal, or modeling feedback to close the gaps in understanding and/or skill that were discovered during the performance of understanding.

☐ The teacher chose the appropriate audience (an individual student, a group of students, or the entire class) to deliver feedback that was specific to those students' needs and strengths.

☐ The teacher provided an immediate opportunity for students to use the feedback (e.g., time for revision, another similar performance of understanding).

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ACTION TOOL C:
Learning Target Lesson-Planning Process Guide

Purpose: To help educators move from a traditional planning process guided by an instructional objective to one guided by a learning target.

Suggestions for Use

- **For an individual teacher who wants to plan a lesson:** Use the guide to find and state the learning target. Then, with the target as your reference, create the success criteria, design a strong performance of understanding, plan other ways to share the target throughout the lesson, and recognize opportunities to feed learning forward.
- **For an individual teacher who wants to refine skills:** Use specific sections to reach a higher level of sophistication in your planning process. As you become more proficient, add additional sections over time until you are able to implement the process with confidence and competence.
- **For groups of teachers:** Use the guide for collaborative planning. Work through the guide together, discussing decisions along the way as you compare ideas and reach consensus.
- **For administrators:** Use the guide to frame conferences with teachers after a walk-through or an observation. Sit together and use the guide to plan a lesson or part of a lesson depending on the area where the teacher shows a need for professional growth or where the administrator would like to deepen understanding of this planning process.

Directions

Use this guide to move from an instructional objective that guides a series of lessons to a learning target that focuses the classroom learning team in today's lesson. The guide will help you plan ways to share the learning target, create student look-fors, feed learning forward, ask targeted questions, encourage student goal setting, and develop assessment-capable students. The insights you construct through this process will inform your planning for differentiating instruction, fostering higher-order thinking, summarizing student achievement, and grading.

Learning Target Lesson-Planning Process Guide

Grade level: _____ Duration of lesson (hours/minutes): _____

Subject: _____ Topic: _____

Today's lesson is part of this unit of study: _____

How many lessons in the unit? _____

Where does the lesson fall in the unit?   ☐ Beginning   ☐ Middle   ☐ End

1. List the instructional objective(s) for this unit or group of lessons:

2. List the essential learning content for today's lesson, including what students will come to know and be able to do by the end of today's lesson.

2a. Essential knowledge. My students must learn that . . .

2b. Essential skills. My students must be able to . . .

3. Identify the potential learning trajectory, or this lesson's "reason to live."

3a. Where does this lesson occur in the unit or group of lessons?
☐ Beginning   ☐ Middle   ☐ End

3b. What have your students already learned about this concept from previous lessons?

3c. What lies ahead for your students? What will they tackle in tomorrow's lesson and the lessons that follow?

3d. What is this lesson's "reason to live"? What is absolutely essential for your students to come to know and be able to do in today's lesson to build on what they already know and to be prepared for the learning challenges that lie ahead?

4. Essential reasoning skill(s): what reasoning processes will best help your students actively construct the kind of understandings that are essential for today's lesson?

My students must learn to . . .

5. The performance of understanding:

- I can use information I gather from this performance to inform my plans for tomorrow's lesson.

- My students can use information they gather during the performance to select strategies for improvement.

This is what my students will do, say, write, or make during today's lesson to deepen their understanding and generate undeniable evidence of their learning so that my students and I can use it to assess their growing competence:

6. The learning target statement: answer the following questions from the "students'-eye view" in student-friendly, developmentally appropriate language.

6a. What will I be able to do when I've finished this lesson?
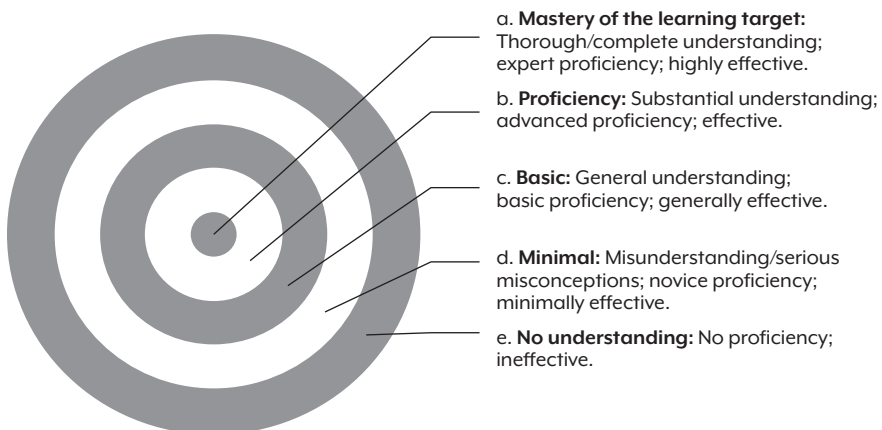
I can . . .

6b. What idea, topic, or subject is important for me to learn and understand so that I can use this information to do it? (Create a bulleted list.)

To be able to do this, I must learn and understand that . . .

6c. How will I be asked to show that I can do this, and how well will I have to do it?

I will show I can do this by . . .

7. Getting to the success criteria: for the performance of understanding in your lesson and based on the learning targets you will share with students, what will typical and not-so-typical student progress look like on the way to the learning target?

a. **Mastery of the learning target:** Thorough/complete understanding; expert proficiency; highly effective.

b. **Proficiency:** Substantial understanding; advanced proficiency; effective.

c. **Basic:** General understanding; basic proficiency; generally effective.

d. **Minimal:** Misunderstanding/serious misconceptions; novice proficiency; minimally effective.

e. **No understanding:** No proficiency; ineffective.

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7a. Describe target mastery. These students will be able to . . .

7b. Describe proficient understanding. These students are close to mastery and will be able to . . .

7c. Describe basic understanding. These students have general understanding and will be able to . . .

7d. Describe minimal understanding. These students are challenged by the content and will be confused about . . .

8. To help students assess where they are in relation to the learning target, how will you organize the criteria for success? Choose one strategy and state your reason for choosing it.

☐ An "I can" statement—for grasping a new concept or term.

☐ A list of "I can" statements to describe mastery of a learning target that is a discrete skill.

☐ A rubric to organize criteria for mastering a learning target that is part of a complex product or process.

☐ A list of student look-fors to guide students' self-assessment as they plan their work and monitor their progress.

☐ A list of guiding questions for mastery of higher-order thinking skill learning targets.

9. In addition to engaging your students in a strong performance of understanding, how will you weave the learning target into the fabric of today's lesson to ensure that it is continuously visible? Check all that apply and explain exactly what you will do.

☐ Verbally share the target.

What will you say or do?

☐ Ask students to paraphrase the target, put it into their own words, or explain the target to a friend to make sure they understood exactly where they are headed in today's lesson.

What will you say or do?

☐ Use a visual (e.g., a picture, a chart, SMART Board, or a student handout).

What will you say or do?

☐ Refer to the learning target throughout the lesson to help students gauge where they are in relation to the learning target.

What will you say or do?

☐ Share examples of strong and weak work and give students the chance to examine the characteristics of each to help them understand what success looks like for today's lesson.

What will you say or do?

☐ Connect what students are doing in today's lesson to what came before today's lesson and what will be coming next in the unit.

What will you say or do?

10. Imagine the kind of mastery goal that would help two specific students during today's lesson—a student who almost gets it and one who is struggling to get it.

10a. Finish these statements to create a "just-right goal" for a student who is close to mastery of the learning target.

I am already good at . . .

I am unsure of or confused about . . .

I need to work on this to improve my understanding:

10b. Finish these statements to create a "just-right goal" for a student who is struggling to reach the learning target. Think about common errors that students make. What would be the logical next step for the student to take?

I am already good at . . .

I am unsure of or confused about . . .

I need to work on this to improve my understanding:

11. Select, adapt, or design specific strategies that would help your two students reach their goals during the performance of understanding in today's lesson.

11a. Finish this statement to create a "just-right" next-step strategy for the student who is close to mastery of the learning target.

This is exactly what I will do:

11b. Finish this statement to create a "just-right" next-step strategy for the student who is struggling to reach the learning target. Think about common errors that students make. What would be the logical next step for the student to take?

This is exactly what I will do:

12. Think about all the ways you can provide your students with feed-forward information during a formative learning cycle in today's lesson.

12a. How will you plan to feed learning forward during the introductory part of the lesson, when you model and explain? Give an example of how you will use the success criteria to explain the concepts in the lesson in ways that will help students envision what mastery looks like and understand what is important to learn, what they will do to learn it, and how they will be asked to demonstrate that learning.

12b. Give an example of how you will use the learning target and success criteria to plan ways to provide feedback during guided practice.

12c. How will you use the success criteria to feed students' learning forward while you give directions for the performance of understanding?

12d. Explain how the success criteria will help you gather information during or soon after the performance of understanding to pinpoint the feedback that a particular student needs to feed his or her learning forward.

13. How will you intentionally teach and scaffold student self-assessment so that students can assess and regulate their work while they are learning during today's lesson?

13a. Finish this statement to suggest self-assessment strategies for the student who is close to mastery of the learning target. What should the student "look for" that will provide evidence of improvement?

This is how I will check my progress along the way. I will look for . . .

13b. Finish this statement to suggest self-assessment strategies for the student who is struggling to reach the learning target. Think about common errors that students make. What should the student "look for" that will provide evidence of improvement?

This is how I will check my progress along the way. I will look for . . .

14. What planned questions will you make sure to ask during today's lesson?

List five "strategic teacher questions" for today's lesson. The questions should be planned, connected to the learning target for today's lesson, and require student explanation and justification.

ACTION TOOL D:
Teacher Self-Assessment Targets and Look-Fors Guide

PURPOSE: To help teachers and school leaders reach a series of professional learning targets, assess where they are in relation to those targets, and provide detailed evidence to support their claims. This guide establishes specific success criteria by which progress toward professional goals can be assessed and monitored to aid specific goal setting and professional action plans.

Suggestions for Use

- **Administrators can use this guide in conjunction with Action Tools B and C to feed their own learning forward.** Use the guide to help you understand what specific elements of the theory look like in action in a particular lesson, classroom, grade level, school, or district.
- **Administrators can use this guide in conjunction with Action Tools B and C to feed teachers' learning forward.** Provide parts of the guide to teachers to help them focus on what it will take to master the concept of using learning targets to improve their teaching.
- **Teachers can use this guide in conjunction with Action Tools B and C to feed their own learning forward.** Use the guide to help you understand what specific elements of the theory look like in action during a particular lesson, assess your level of performance for each target, provide specific evidence to anchor your assessments, and set self-improvement goals.

Directions

The following self-assessment guide will focus your professional practice, self-reflection, and goal setting as an individual or as a professional learning community. Use the guide to reflect on your practice during a specific lesson, and notice patterns of practice that meet or do not meet a learning target theory of action. Use your findings to frame discussions with colleagues about the logical next steps you should take to increase your use of learning targets in your classroom and school. It's only through collaborative and evidence-based decision making that you will advance a learning target theory of action to improve student learning and achievement.

Teacher Self-Assessment Targets and Look-Fors Guide

Target 1: Each time I plan a lesson, I begin by defining the learning target that my students and I will aim for during that specific lesson.

I will know I have reached this target when I am able to say . . .	Not Confident	Not Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
• I can define the learning target for today's lesson in a clear, specific, and descriptive target statement and use it to plan my lesson.				
• I can describe exactly what my students will come to know (the essential content) or be able to do (the essential skill), and how they will be required to think about that content (essential reasoning processes) as a result of today's lesson.				
• I can describe exactly why I am asking my students to learn this chunk of information *on this day* and *in this way*.				

Which of the following statements describes how you met this target in today's lesson?

☐ I defined a specific learning target for today's lesson—a statement of exactly what my students would be able to do or come to know as a result of today's lesson.

☐ I had a general learning target for today's lesson—a learning statement that was general and covered more than one lesson.

☐ I had an instructional objective for today's lesson. I worked toward an instructional objective from the textbook or the district curriculum that uses professional instructional language to state the important outcomes for this unit or set of lessons.

☐ I did not have a specific purpose for today's lesson. My students were "doing more of the same." It was a repeat of a previous lesson with no unique outcome intended.

> State your specific learning target for the lesson and explain why it describes exactly what you are asking your students to come to know or be able to do in this lesson that is unique. How is it different from what they did or learned yesterday and what they will do or learn tomorrow?

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Target 2: Each lesson I teach includes a strong performance of understanding that deepens my students' understanding of the essential content, helps them aim for understanding, allows them to assess their work as they are learning, and enables us to gather evidence of student achievement of the learning target.

I will know I have reached this target when I am able to say . . .	Not Confident	Not Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
• I can require that what my students actually do, say, write, or make during today's lesson will produce compelling evidence of what they understand and/or are able to do in relation to the learning target.				

Which of the following statements describes what you required your students to actually do, say, make, or write during today's lesson? Below the statement you select, describe the activity.

☐ My students engaged in a strong performance of understanding. My students engaged in a learning experience during today's lesson that deepened their understanding of the learning target's essential content and skills, required them to use reasoning processes, promoted self-assessment, and produced compelling evidence of where they are in relation to the specific learning target for today's lesson.

☐ My students engaged in a learning activity. I asked students to engage in an activity that was related to the learning target and produced general evidence of what they know and are able to do or evidence of what some of them know or are able to do.

☐ What I asked my students to do during the lesson did not produce evidence of where they are in relation to the learning target. The activity was unrelated or minimally related to the learning target or produced little to no evidence of what students know or can do in relation to the learning target.

☐ I did not require my students to actually do something with the content or the skills that were the focus of my lesson.

Describe exactly what you required students to do during the lesson. What was the task? How long did it take? What did students produce that you could assess? What did they do that you could observe and assess? What evidence would students glean about what they knew well, knew some of, or did not know to help them self-assess and self-regulate?

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Target 3: My students and I gather strong evidence of learning using specific success criteria and student look-fors that reveal where students are in relation to the learning target for today's lesson.

I will know I have reached this target when I am able to say . . .	Not Confident	Not Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
• I can describe exactly what I will "look for" to support my claim that my students have mastered the learning target for today's lesson.				
• I can describe the specific characteristics of quality work that I will use to assess what my students did to demonstrate mastery of the essential content and skills that are part of the learning target for today's lesson.				
• I can describe and explain what success looks like for today's lesson so that my students are able to assess their mastery of the essential knowledge and skills that are central to the learning target for today's lesson.				

Which of the following statements describes how you and your students assessed student success in today's lesson?

☐ My students and I assessed the quality of my students' work and performance using specific success criteria for the learning target in today's lesson.

☐ I did not share the criteria for success for today's lesson with my students. I was the only one able to assess the quality of their work and performance using specific success criteria for the learning target in today's lesson.

☐ I did not have specific success criteria that described what good work in the lesson would look like so that my students and I could gauge where we were in relation to the learning target. Instead, I ranked the students' performance using letter grades, scores, percentages, or number correct.

☐ I had no standard of quality for what my students did to demonstrate mastery of the learning target in today's lesson.

☐ I did not require my students to actually do something during today's lesson that I could observe or assess to gauge what they understood or could do in relation to the learning target.

Describe exactly what you used to assess the students' level of understanding or skill as you proceeded with the lesson. And describe exactly what your students used to assess the quality of the work they produced during this lesson to demonstrate mastery of the lesson's essential content or skill(s).

Target 4: In each of my lessons I use multiple strategies along with a performance of understanding to share the learning target with my students.

I will know I have reached this target when I am able to say . . .	Not Confident	Not Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
• I can use multiple ways to weave the learning target into the fabric of today's lesson so that my students can see, understand, and use it throughout the formative learning cycle to improve their learning and achievement.				

Which of the remaining statements below (at least two, but check all that apply) describe how you shared the learning target for today's lesson with your students so that they understood and actively used it to plan and assess their work? Support each statement you select with specific evidence of what you did during today's lesson. Notice that the first statement has been checked for you. Without a performance of understanding, students have no chance to aim for understanding.

☑ I required a strong performance of understanding of my students because it is the single best way to share the learning target and success criteria with them.

Describe exactly what you required your students to do to produce evidence of their mastery of the learning target for today's lesson.

☐ I verbally shared the target.

Describe exactly what you said and when and how you said it.

☐ I asked students to paraphrase the target, put it into their own words, or explain the target to a friend to make sure they understood exactly where they were headed in today's lesson.

☐ I used a visual (picture, chart, SMART Board, or student handout) to help my students see, recognize, and understand the specific learning target for today's lesson.

Describe the visual and why it was specific to today's lesson. How did you use the visual? Describe exactly what you and the students did with it.

☐ I referred to the learning target throughout the lesson, helping students gauge where they were in relation to the learning target.

How, specifically, did you do this, and why?

☐ I shared examples of strong and weak work and gave students the chance to examine the characteristics of each to better understand what success would look like for today's lesson.

What did the examples look like, and where did you get them? Did you create them? Were they anonymous samples from previous students? How did the students use the examples? In groups? With a rubric?

☐ I connected what students were learning and doing in today's lesson to what they would be asked to do in the lesson(s) coming next in this unit and/or to what they learned and did in yesterday's lesson.

What did you say or demonstrate to your students that helped them make the connections between what they already learned, were learning today, and would be learning tomorrow?

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Target 5: During each lesson, I consistently feed my students' learning forward toward the learning target.

I will know I have reached this target when I am able to say . . .	Not Confident	Not Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
• I can provide feedback that is directly related to the learning target for today's lesson.				
• I can provide feedback that describes exactly what students did well and not so well in relation to the success criteria.				
• I can describe next-step strategies students should use to improve or learn more.				
• I can provide feedback while my students still have the opportunity to use it.				
• I can provide feedback that uses student-friendly, developmentally appropriate language.				

Which of the following statements describes your actions? Check all that apply. Support each statement you select with specific evidence of what you did during today's lesson.

☐ I consistently provided feedback that was related to the learning target and criteria for success, describing what the student did well and which criteria were not met and why.

☐ I fed students' learning forward during the introductory part of the lesson—I modeled and explained by pointing out what was important to learn and be able to do, and described or demonstrated specific strategies for doing so.

☐ I used the criteria for success to "explain" the concepts in the lesson in ways that helped the students envision what success would look like for the lesson, understand the characteristics of a strong student performance of understanding, and set goals for improving their work.

☐ I referred to the learning target and the success criteria to feed students' learning forward during guided practice.

☐ I pointed out specific strategies related to the learning target that students could use to improve their work as I described what the students would be asked to do during the performance of understanding.

☐ I used written, verbal, or modeling feedback to feed learning forward and close the gaps in understanding or skill that I discovered during the performance of understanding.

☐ I chose the appropriate audience (an individual student, a group of students, or the entire class) to deliver feedback that was targeted to the specific students' needs and strengths.

☐ I delivered feedback that described where the students were in relation to the learning target and suggested next steps for improvement while the students still had time to act on the feedback to improve their work.

☐ I provided enough feedback after the student performance of understanding so that students could be mindful of the assignment criteria for success and know exactly what they should do next to improve their work.

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Target 6: During each lesson, I consistently teach my students how to set goals for their learning and assess the quality of their work.

I will know I have reached this target when I am able to say . . .	Not Confident	Not Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
• I used a formative learning cycle during today's lesson to constantly feed my students' learning forward toward challenging learning goals.				
• My students understand the process of self-assessment and used it before, during, and after the performance of understanding in today's lesson.				
• My students can apply the success criteria to set mastery goals for increasing their understanding and producing quality work during today's lesson.				
• My students can accurately apply success criteria to their own work to describe exactly what they know and can do well and exactly where they need to increase their understanding.				
• My students consistently seek feedback and ask questions about how to improve their learning during today's lesson.				

Which of the following statements describes your actions? Check all that apply. Support each statement you select with specific evidence of what you did during today's lesson.

☐ I engaged my students in an appropriate level of challenge that required them to seek clarity and teacher feedback.

☐ I helped my students aim for mastery goals by describing what we would do in today's lesson in terms of their increased understanding and skill.

☐ I wove my feed-forward information throughout the formative learning cycle in today's lesson to encourage student goal setting and self-assessment.

☐ I engaged students in a strong performance of understanding and encouraged them to assess their own progress as they were learning.

☐ I provided timely feedback on the performance of understanding to help my students compare their assessment with my feedback.

☐ I provided a "golden second chance" during today's lesson—the opportunity for my students to use my feedback to improve their performance during an additional task.

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ACTION TOOL E:
Student Self-Assessment and Intentional Learning Guide

My Learning Target:			
My Look-Fors	**I need to work on this**	**I am unsure of or confused about this**	**I am already good at this**
I can			
I can			
I can			

Mark where you are on your way to the learning target. ➜ ➜ ➜ ➜ ➜ ➜

My Goals for Today's Lesson Thinking about what I am already good at, where I am confused, and what I need to work on, here is what I plan to do during today's lesson to aim for and hit my learning target.
1.
2.
3.

My Questions Thinking about the goals I have for improving my understanding and work, here are the questions I have about what I am learning and being asked to do. Getting these questions answered will help me hit my learning target.
1.
2.
3.

My Learning Strategies This is exactly what I can do to improve my learning and do quality work.
1.
2.
3.

ACTION TOOL F:
No More "Garbage In, Garbage Out": Understanding Connections Among Instruction, Assessment, and Grading

Challenge Questions

- If you could freeze-frame a moment during your school day, in what percentage of the classes would you find *students* performing some activity, assignment, or assessment?
- If you could freeze-frame a moment during your school day, what percentage of the activities, assignments, or assessments in which students were engaged would give *direct evidence* about the knowledge and/or skills that students were intended to learn?

Big Ideas

- A performance of understanding engages students directly with intended content and skills (in the process showing them what these mean); deepens their understanding; and provides strong evidence of what they know and can do.
- What students do, make, say, or write gives both the teacher and the student evidence of learning.
- How you *observe* or *score* a performance of understanding defines its value as evidence.
- Performances of understanding promote student goal setting and motivation to learn.
- Every lesson needs a performance of understanding for its particular learning target. Feedback should directly reflect expectations for learning.
- Instructional activities, formative and summative assessments, and grades should reflect coherent and coordinated performances of understanding.
- Graded performance should be a direct match with expectations for learning. Graded performances can match expectations for learning by
    — Summing up a set of lesson-sized performances of understanding.
    — Checking up on cumulative knowledge and skill developed over time (performance of understanding of a unit goal or standard).

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The Concept

PERFORMANCE	OF	UNDERSTANDING
What students do, make, say, or write	Shows students' . . . Develops students' . . . Gives evidence of . . .	Essential knowledge and skills that students are intended to learn

Example

PERFORMANCE	OF	UNDERSTANDING
In groups, students make models or diagrams of their chosen planet's rotation and revolution patterns, then individually write paragraphs explaining what that means for their planet.	Shows students' . . . Develops students' . . . Gives evidence of . . .	Movement patterns of planets in our solar system

Counterexample

PERFORMANCE	OF	UNDERSTANDING
In groups, students look up facts about a chosen planet and put these on a "creative" poster.	Shows students' . . . Develops students' . . . Gives evidence of . . .	Movement patterns of planets in our solar system

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The Concept

GRADING	OF	LEARNING
Set of graded assessments [Sets of grades based on what students did, made, said, or wrote]	Shows students and others current standing regarding . . .	Essential knowledge and skills that students were intended to learn

Example

GRADING	OF	LEARNING
• Test on planets • Paragraphs explaining planet movements • Report comparing two planets' characteristics and movements	Shows students and others current standing regarding . . .	Characteristics and movement patterns of the planets in our solar system

Counterexample

GRADING	OF	LEARNING
• Group planet posters • Report on telescopes or rockets	Shows students and others current standing regarding . . .	Characteristics and movement patterns of the planets in our solar system