Formative Assessment Glossary of Terms

Learning Goals

Learning Goals describe what students will learn in a lesson, stating clearly what learning the student will understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson. The learning can include knowledge, skills, conceptual understanding, analytical principles, and procedural fluency. Learning Goals are written in language that students can understand so that they can monitor, assess, and reflect on their own learning.

Success Criteria

Success Criteria describe what students will say, make, do, or write to indicate achievement of the Learning Goals. Success Criteria are derived from – and aligned to – Learning Goals, but they are more specific. With Success Criteria, teachers should be able to complete this following statement: If students have learned *x* [Learning Goal], then they will be able to do *a, b, c* [Success Criteria]. Success Criteria are written in language students can understand. Success Criteria tell students what they will be able to do once they have achieved the Learning Goal.

Evidence-Gathering Opportunity

In a lesson plan, teachers plan opportunities to elicit evidence of student learning that are aligned to the Learning Goals and Success Criteria. Evidence-gathering opportunities include examining student work, listening to and participating in classroom discussions, observing student peer and self-assessment, and questioning students.

Peer and Self-Assessment

Students are the ones who are doing the learning, so they share a responsibility for monitoring their progress toward the lesson's Learning Goals. Students understand and use Learning Goals and Success Criteria to evaluate their own learning and achievement. Teachers support and guide students in Peer and Self-Assessment. For Peer Assessment, students need to be taught to evaluate the work of others and offer constructive advice to their peers. Teachers plan opportunities for Peer and Self-Assessment to regularly occur during lessons.

Participant Structures

Teachers select one or more participant work structures (e.g., whole class, small group, pairs, individual) when planning instructional tasks. Different participant structures allow for varied opportunities to gather evidence of students' progress towards the Learning Goals and Success Criteria. Teachers plan for participant structures based on the type of evidence of student learning that the structures can generate.

Anticipated Response

Teachers anticipate student responses to lesson activities and tasks based on their experience and knowledge of the content, students, and the lesson. In planning for students' anticipated responses, teachers consider common challenges and misconceptions that might affect student understanding and success with the lesson. These challenges often include language demands found in a text or tasks. Teachers ask themselves: (1) What are common challenges or misconceptions that might arise in teaching this content? and (2) How will I support students at these points in the lesson? Anticipating responses helps teachers envision what student responses will look or sound like during the lesson if students are making (or not making) progress toward the Learning Goals and Success Criteria. By anticipating responses, teachers can plan for, and execute, appropriate pedagogical action for scenarios that are likely to unfold during the lesson.

Pedagogical Action

Pedagogical Actions are the moves teachers make in response to evidence of student learning; they are intended to push student learning closer to the Learning Goals and Success Criteria. Pedagogical Actions are based on teachers' interpretation of real-time (or as close to real-time) evidence collected during the lesson, and respond to students' immediate learning needs. Pedagogical Actions include reviewing, modeling, providing examples, prompting, giving feedback, telling, explaining, directing, or continuing, stopping, or adjusting the planned lesson. To be effective, these actions must: be related to the Learning Goals and Success Criteria; be specific and clear; provide suggestions, hints, or cues rather than correct answers; and engage students in the task.

Culminating Task

Quality instructional tasks, designed to build students' thinking, can reveal substantive insights into how their thinking is developing. The final task in each lesson incorporates the lesson's Success Criteria. It provides teachers with the opportunity to assess whether students have accomplished the lesson's Success Criteria and achieved the Learning Goals.