Learning Goals and Success Criteria

Establishing Learning Goals and Success Criteria is the first step in planning formative assessment. Learning Goals describe what students will learn (not what they will do) during a lesson—one or more periods of learning. They guide lesson design and formative assessment processes. Learning Goals are derived from the Building Blocks of the standards (i.e., steps towards meeting the standard), and they should state clearly what students will understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Teachers might write one or multiple Learning Goals from a Building Block, depending on the depth and scope of the learning it describes. Success Criteria are derived from Learning Goals, but they are more specific. They explicitly describe student performances of understanding or skills—what students will say, do, make, or write—to demonstrate that they have met the Learning Goals.

Guidance

Learning Goals	Success Criteria
Describe what learning students are to develop (an understanding, principled knowledge, skill, or a process) as a result of this lesson.	Describe what students need to say, do, make, or write to show that they have met the goal (i.e., what are the performances of a skill, understanding, that will demonstrate that the learning goal has been accomplished, etc.?).
Start with a verb (e.g., apply, characterize, understand).	Start with a verb (e.g., explain, describe, write, model).
Be sure that the Learning Goal is manageable within the context of one lesson.	Be sure that the Success Criteria are aligned with the Learning Goal, and are indications of achievement.
Write in language that is understandable to students.	Write in language that is understandable to students so they can use the criteria to monitor their own learning. Teachers will need to explain the Success Criteria at the outset of a lesson, and provide exemplars if necessary, to make sure students understand what is expected of them

Examples

Learning Goals	Success Criteria
Differentiate between the concepts of magnitude and position for signed numbers.	Correctly select “<” or “>” in inequalities of the following type -3 __ -7, 3 __ -7, -7 __ -3, and then justify their selection. Explain why -7 is less than 3, even though 7 is a larger number than three.
Recognize the structure of repeated addition and understand that repeated addition can be expressed as the number of times a number repeats.	Create number sentences using repeated addition, from a given set of objects. Make an accurate drawing of their number sentence. Correctly describe the number of repeats in a concrete representation (e.g., “I have 6 repeats of this set of 3 things”). Correctly and precisely use “times” to express the number of repeats.