

# Establishing Learning Goals and Success Criteria

Transcript for the online video from CSAI – Section 2

Welcome back to the module on Establishing Learning Goals and Success Criteria. This video addresses the second section of this module: Writing Tips for Learning Goals and Success Criteria.

Initially, it may be challenging to differentiate between activities and Learning Goals and between Learning Goals and Success Criteria. It takes effort and practice to articulate these things in ways that strengthen formative assessment skills, guide instruction, and keep student learning on track towards proficient speaking and listening.

We have seven tips that can help guide the process of writing effective Learning Goals and Success Criteria. The first writing tip is: Learning Goals come first; Success Criteria follow.

Think about these two questions:

- What do my students need to learn?
- How will I know if they've learned it?

Because of the logic of the questions (i.e., the second question refers to the first one), it's clear that they should be answered in order. In other words, Success Criteria are based on Learning Goals, so write the Learning Goals first.

The second writing tip is: Make sure that the Learning Goal reflects important understandings and/or skills. That is, make sure it describes understanding, knowledge, and skills that students will be able to use in other contexts. For example, a language Learning Goal would not address understanding a particular set of vocabulary words to use in a particular setting, but instead refer to having the skills and understanding to use appropriate terminology in specific situations. This is a generalizable skill that can be applied to any type of context in the future.

The third writing tip is: Make the Success Criteria specific. That is, make sure that the Success Criteria describe a specific performance that students will work towards during the course of a lesson to demonstrate they have met the Learning Goal. For example, a Learning Goal may be to “understand and be able to use appropriate greetings in specific situations,” the Success Criteria could be, “I can appropriately greet elders at community events.”

The 4th writing tip is: double check that your Learning Goal and Success Criteria are fully aligned. Recall two major, related ideas in aligning lesson Learning Goals with Success Criteria.

First, Success Criteria are concrete representations of the lesson Learning Goals. Second, Success Criteria represent a visible pathway that students will take during the lesson to achieve the lesson Learning Goal. At points along the way, these Success Criteria enable teachers and students to assess whether students are on track with their learning and to take action to fill in any gaps if needed. For example, if the Learning Goal is to understand how to use alliteration in a poem to create rhythm, then the Success Criteria may start with: I can identify alliteration in a poem I read, then progress to: I can brainstorm groups of words that start with the same letter. And culminate with: I can include my brainstormed words in a poem to create rhythm with alliteration.

Writing tip #5 is Make Lesson Sized. Learning Goals and Success Criteria should be of the right grain size to be able to be accomplished during the course of a lesson. Not too big and not too small. A lesson, however, can span over one or several class periods.

Writing tip #6 is Build Towards End-of-Year expectations. Each lesson-sized Learning Goal should build on the ones that came before so that learning builds cumulatively toward larger, unit size goals, and ultimately, end-of-course expectations. Unit sized goals and end-of-course expectations are of much larger grain size than lesson-sized Learning Goals. Each Learning Goal should be a building block toward the end-of-year expectation. To determine what building block students are ready to learn, pay attention to both prior and future learning.

Writing tip #7 is Use Student-friendly Language. Formative assessment supports students to be active participants in their own learning. It all begins with understanding the Learning Goals and Success Criteria. With this information, students know what is expected of them and why their work is relevant. It enables them to take ownership of their own learning. This ownership also takes place through self and peer assessment and by students actively participating in all elements of the formative assessment process. Next, we'll pause and reflect.

Think of an upcoming lesson you will be teaching. Write out a Learning Goal and Success Criteria for this lesson. What writing tips are helpful for you to keep in mind during this process? Pause the video now to reflect on this question.

Thank You. You have now completed the second section of the Establishing Learning Goals and Success Criteria module.

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