

Learning Targets² ...

...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 ... 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.

The Who, What and Why of Learning Targets²

What Do Teachers Do?	What Do Students Do?
Craft learning targets for lessons aligned to state standards. Determine the best point in a lesson to introduce the learning target – at the beginning of the lesson or later (to promote discovery or grappling with new concepts). Discuss and unpack the learning targets with students.	Engage with the learning target – explain it in their own words with a partner or small group; ask clarifying questions; and explore how they will demonstrate that they've met the target.
Refer to learning targets throughout the lesson and align activities to support students in meeting them.	Articulate how each activity is helping them move closer to achieving the learning target.
Check for whole-class understanding	Self-assess where they are in relation to a specific learning target using quick checks, such as fist-to-five. Support other students in assessing and meeting learning targets.
Check for individual understanding and use data to make decisions about next instructional steps.	Turn in written checks for understanding (e.g., exit tickets) that demonstrate where they are in relation to one or more learning targets.
Connect daily and supporting learning targets to long-term learning targets and engage students in understanding the state standards they are working toward.	Understand how daily lessons will help them meet long-term learning targets. Support peers in understanding the learning targets and standards.

Writing a Learning Performance (Target)¹

Once you have selected the three dimensions that your lesson will focus on, weave them together into a single statement describing the objective of the lesson. This statement, called a learning performance (target), has the same structure as a performance expectation. But unlike a performance expectation, a learning performance (target) is focused on just one step in the instructional sequence.

Ask the Right Questions^{1, 4}

Each step in the instructional sequences you design should integrate the three dimensions ([practices](#), [disciplinary core ideas](#), and [crosscutting concepts](#)) into a single learning performance. As you write and/or evaluate your lesson plans, you may want to focus on these questions:

1. What **content standard** (or part of a standard) am I teaching?
2. What are my **learning targets** for this standard?
3. What **practices** should students engage in to explore the phenomena and/or representations of this core idea?
4. What **crosscutting concepts** support learning the core idea?
5. What **strategies** will help me focus and pace my lesson appropriately through the 5E Learning Cycle?
6. What **learning experiences** will require **ALL (100%)** of my students to engage in content through reading, writing, talking, listening, and investigating?
7. What **actions** will I take **to assess throughout** the lesson so immediate intervention and/or acceleration can take place?
8. What **adjustments** need to be made for the following lesson, including intervention and/or acceleration?

Guiding Questions for Writing Learning Targets in Student Language³

The language of learning targets should enable students to see themselves as the agents of learning.

- What will I be able to do when I've finished this lesson? **I can...** or **We are learning to...**
- What idea, topic, or subject is important for me to learn and understand so that I can hit the target? **To be able to do this, I must learn and understand...**
- What will I do to show that I understand the target, and how well will I have to do it? **I will show I can do this by...**

Resources

1. <http://ngss.nsta.org/designing-units-and-lessons.aspx>
2. *Leaders of Their Own Learning: Transforming Schools Through Student-engaged Assessment* by Ron Berger, Leah Rugen, and Libby Woodfin
3. *Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today's Lesson* by Connie M. Moss and Susan M. Brookhart
4. Instructional Strategies Project Essential Planning Questions from Alabama State Department of Education, Thomas R. Bice, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Education, November 2013.