



Sharing and Ensuring Students Understand Learning Targets

DIRECTIONS: Pick a partner, and read two scenarios each. Discuss the following with your partner:

- How does the teacher or team ensure that students understand the learning targets?
- Could any of the scenarios work in your classroom? Which one(s)? How?

Scenario 1: *Mr. Quinn's Pretest*

In Mr. Quinn's classroom the learning targets are posted on the bulletin board. He starts each week by pointing to the chart of targets and reminding students which specific targets they are currently working to master.

As he begins a new unit of instruction, Mr. Quinn creates a pretest that lists the learning targets at the start of each section of the assessment. In other words, the pretest is organized so that each learning target is the header to a section of questions; that way, the students always know how the assessment questions are aligned to the learning targets.

Mr. Quinn uses this pretest to gather data by individual student for EACH target on the assessment. He uses this information to differentiate the process, products, and content throughout the unit of instruction.

Students in his classroom maintain a portfolio with a list of learning targets—a mirror image of the learning targets posted on Mr. Quinn's bulletin board. Students keep their pretest results in their portfolios and gather evidence that they are mastering the targets and are ready for the summative assessment.

How does Mr. Quinn ensure that students understand the learning targets?

Scenario 2: *Monday Math Quizzes*

A team of Grade 7 math teachers has agreed to give a quick five-point quiz every Monday. The quiz is aligned to the learning targets for that week of study. At the end of the day, the team gathers to sort all of the student quizzes from their various class periods into three piles:

1. Students who clearly don't understand the majority of the learning targets.
2. Students who clearly do understand the majority of the learning targets.
3. It remains unclear if students understand the targets or not.

At this point, team members select one of the piles and create a series of learning activities or experiences to support the learners represented in the pile.



On Tuesday, teachers reenter their classrooms with three differentiated options in their hands, and students embark on the activities they are to accomplish that week relative to their learning needs.

In this scenario, teachers remain in their individual classrooms, monitoring all three groups at once. Variation: In some cases, if schedules align, students move to different classrooms for the week based on their learning needs.

The teachers move about their rooms throughout the week, monitoring student changes in learning with a (+) for targets mastered, a (-) for targets not mastered, and a (?) if evidence is inconsistent. The team touches base quickly at the end of each day for a quick brainstorming session to help the learners in their room who are not mastering the learning targets prior to Friday's summative assessment.

How does the Grade 7 math team ensure that students understand the learning targets?

Scenario 3: *Ms. Kennedy's Writing Lesson*

Every Monday, Ms. Kennedy poses a writing prompt to her students. Together, Ms. Kennedy and her students review the prompt as well as the rubric that clarifies all of the criteria needed to produce a high-quality piece of writing.

However, even before her students begin brainstorming their own topics, Ms. Kennedy shares anonymous examples from students who wrote on the same prompt. She is purposeful in choosing examples of both strong and weak work. This way, when students review the anonymous examples using the rubric, they are able to determine what qualities make the example strong or weak work.

If it is a new prompt, Ms. Kennedy usually opts to write on the topic herself and let her students critique her work. She has found that students love to critique the work of their teacher!

After students write their first drafts, Ms. Kennedy's students critique their own papers using the rubric. Using the rubric categories, students identify the feedback they need from Ms. Kennedy to improve their writing. Around the room, Ms. Kennedy hangs sign-up sheets for each category of the rubric. Students sign up for a conference with Ms. Kennedy based on the feedback they need. By using this process, students can conference with Ms. Kennedy about one aspect of quality at a time, and she only gives feedback about the category of the student's choosing. Because the rubric brings clarity to the learning, Ms. Kennedy is able to easily provide descriptive feedback to her students.

How does Ms. Kennedy ensure that students understand the learning targets?