

LEARNING INTENTIONS & SUCCESS CRITERIA

DAY 1 WORKSHOP

SUCCESS CRITERIA DEFINITIONS

There are numerous definitions and descriptions of success criteria. Here is a sampling of definitions that collectively convey the essential information about what success criteria are and how they should be used, in and out of the classroom. Use these definitions to build a common vocabulary in your school, district, region, or state.

- “The purpose of the success criteria, or “what are we looking for?” is to make students understand what the teacher is using as the criteria for judging their work, and of course to ensure that the teacher is clear about the criteria that will determine if the learning intentions have been successfully achieved... The success criteria, or ‘How will we know?’ need to state as exactly as possible what the students and teacher will want to see. (Hattie, 2009, p. 170)
- Success criteria provide the “way of knowing that the desired learning (learning intention) has been achieved.” (Hattie, 2009, p. 47)
- “Learning objectives and success criteria are the tools which enable pupils to exercise power over their learning. Active learners need to be engaged and reflective: success criteria – the ingredients, steps or possible features of the learning objective – provide a rationale for the learning objective in real terms, so that the learner is aware of the expectations and can identify which success criteria are going well and which are not.” (Clarke, 2008, p. 81)
- “In order to have a maximum impact, success criteria need to be known by teachers first. All pupils need to have the same learning objective, the same context, and the same criteria. Differentiate the activity rather than the success criteria.” (Clarke, 2008, pp. 92-93)
- “Using success criteria has enabled pupils to have a sense of what their work should include, and, if success criteria are broken down and include examples along the way, quality will be increased.” (Clarke, 2008, p. 117)

- “Success criteria help students to gain a better understanding of what successful learning might look like in ways that they can recognize from what they know now... They spell out in greater detail the learning intention.” (Absolum, 2010, p. 83)
- “Success criteria are standards or rules which students use to make judgements about the quality of performance. Students use success criteria to determine what progress they are making toward achieving learning goals. Criteria show what success “looks like”, and when used to assess, give both the teacher and the student feedback about learning. Whereas learning goals answer the question, “Where am I going?” Success criteria help students to answer the question, “How am I going?” (AER GAINS Video Series—Segment 4—Developing Success Criteria)
- “Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.” (AER Gains Video Series)

SUCCESS CRITERIA -- KEY POINTS

- Identify the *details* needed to achieve the learning intention.
- Specify what students are to *do* to demonstrate learning.
- Success criteria provide a “map” to the learning destination—“How are we going?”
- Use specific terms from the standard.
- Include objective wording only; no subjective language (i.e., some, few, little, many, elaborate, etc.)
- Brainstorm *other* details not included in the standard, but needed.
- Compare success criteria with the standard to ensure they accurately match its concepts, skills, and intended rigor.
- Include the *context* in which learning will take place in the success criteria for learning progressions (Step 6).