

# LEARNING INTENTIONS & SUCCESS CRITERIA

## DAY 1 WORKSHOP

### LEARNING INTENTION DEFINITIONS

There are numerous definitions and descriptions of learning intentions. Here is a sampling of definitions that collectively convey the essential information about what learning intentions 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.

- "Learning intentions are what we intend students to learn." (Hattie, 2012, p. 48)
- "Learning intentions describe what it is we want students to learn in terms of the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values within any particular unit or lesson. Learning intentions should be clear, and provide guidance to the teacher about what to teach, help learners be aware of what they should learn from the lesson, and form the basis for assessing what the students have learned and for assessing what the teachers have taught well to each student. The activities planned for the lesson need to be focused on these intentions." (Hattie, 2009, pp. 162-163)
- "Good learning intentions are those that make clear to the students the type or level of performance that they need to attain, so that they understand where and when to invest energies, strategies, and thinking, and where they are positioned along the trajectory toward successful learning. In this way, they know when they have achieved the intended learning.... Learning intentions describe what it is that we want students to learn, and their clarity is at the heart of formative assessment. Unless teachers are clear about what they want students to learn (and what the outcome of this learning looks like) they are hardly likely to develop good assessment of that learning." (Hattie, 2012, p. 47)
- "Clarity around understanding the standards and what must be learned and taught begins with the teacher... It is absolutely imperative that the teacher find clarity in the standards in order to translate clear learning expectations for students. If the teacher is unclear about what students must know and be able to do, it is impossible for students to follow or own their learning." (O'Connell and Vandas, 2015, p. 54)

- "The learning intention is expressed in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills, and links directly with the relevant curriculum document. The design of learning intentions starts with the answers to these questions: What do I want students to know (a focus on knowledge)? What do I want students to be able to do (a focus on skills)?" (Cognition Education Limited, Feedback that Makes Learning Visible, p. 13)
- "There are two parts to supporting a learner to become clear about what is to be learned: naming or identifying the learning (learning intentions), and describing the learning (models or exemplars and success criteria). These are two parts to a whole, and you must not lose sight of that whole." (Absolum, 2010, pp. 81-82)
- "Why do we share learning intentions with students? To identify what students will be learning; to explain the reason for the learning; to present them in language the students understand; to revisit the learning intention throughout the lesson." (Cognition Education Limited, Feedback that Makes Learning Visible, p. 68)
- "I introduced the term learning intention to my students and explained that this was going to be the *flashlight* in my teaching and their learning. We talked about our learning being like a journey through a tunnel. This was where I introduced success criteria, and we likened them to *signposts* along the way through the tunnel. Often a picture of the flashlight was placed besides the words learning intention and signposts beside the success criteria." (Absolum, 2010, p. 83)

### LEARNING INTENTIONS -- KEY POINTS

- A summary or general restatement of the standard
- A more global statement without specifics (i.e., "learn to write an opinion piece" or "learn to use a math formula to solve a problem")
- Retain rigor and intent of the standard
- Do *not* include specific details from the standard. These will appear in the success criteria.
- *Do* include key terms for defining later.
- Use age-appropriate, kid-friendly language.
- Make no references to specific *context* (textual, curricular, situational, procedural, etc.) These will appear in the success criteria for the learning progressions.
- Include *why* this is important—for students *and* teachers.
- The learning intention represents the learning *destination*—"Where are we going?"