

Clarify the lesson purpose and identify the learning goal/intention for the lesson

Clarify the lesson purpose

Clarifying the purpose and reason for conducting the lesson is the first and most crucial step towards a learning-focused lesson.

Consider questions like:

- Is it a need determined from assessment information?
- What prior learning has occurred and what do the students already know?
- Where does the lesson fit into the learning sequence/unit plan?
- Is it pre-learning for the next lesson in the sequence?
- Why do students need to learn this?
- Is the learning relevant in students' lives?
- When might students use or need this learning?

Discuss with the students:

- why they are learning this at all
- how the learning is relevant in their lives and when they might use or need this learning
- how the learning/lesson fits into the bigger picture of their learning.

Establish the learning intentions/goals

A learning intention is simply a description of what you want your students to know, understand or be able to do by the end of a lesson. It tells students what the focus for learning is going to be.

The learning intention/goal needs to focus clearly on the *knowledge*, *understandings* and skills being targeted without getting side-tracked by the activity or the context.

Knowledge is factual information – the parts of a plant, key events of World War One, etc.

Understanding typically concerns concepts, reasons or processes – the need for a healthy diet, the difference between convection, conduction and radiation, etc.

Skills are proficiencies, dexterities or abilities acquired through training or experience – applying techniques, drawing conclusions based on evidence, using a multiplication grid, collaboration, etc.

Lesson learning intentions/goals should:

- contribute towards achievement of syllabus outcomes
- identify a specific 'chunk' of learning required for students to achieve the global learning intentions from the learning sequence or unit plan
- focus on generic, transferable skills
- focus on the learning rather than the activity
- be expressed in language that students understand
- be shared with students at the outset

Effective learning intentions/goals

Learning intentions are most effective when they focus on the learning rather than the activity or task.



We are learning to...

use research skills to gather information



We are learning to...

research information about pandas.

The first learning intention above makes it clear that the students are learning research skills, which they can then transfer to other learning contexts or situations.

When writing lesson learning intentions/goals it is also useful to separate the activity, from the learning intention/goal and the context. The activity is what the students will be doing while the context is the vehicle for the learning.

For example:

Activity	Learning Intention	Context
Give a speech for or against smoking	To present a point of view in a persuasive way	Speech about smoking
Draw a bar chart to show how pupils in our class come to school	To present information graphically	Bar chart on types of transport used to get to school
Work effectively in a group to design a leaflet to promote healthy eating	To be able to work effectively in a group	Healthy eating leaflet
Write a letter to the local MP about culling kangaroos	To present an argument for or against	Letter about culling kangaroos
Complete a worksheet on multiplication	Multiply whole numbers	Worksheet

Share learning intentions/goals

At the beginning of the lesson it is important to share the specific learning intention/goal and explain how it contributes to achievement of the global intention/goals in the learning sequence/unit plan. This helps students see the 'big picture', make connections, understand the purpose of and reasons for the lesson.

When learning intentions are shared and discussed with students they are more likely to be:

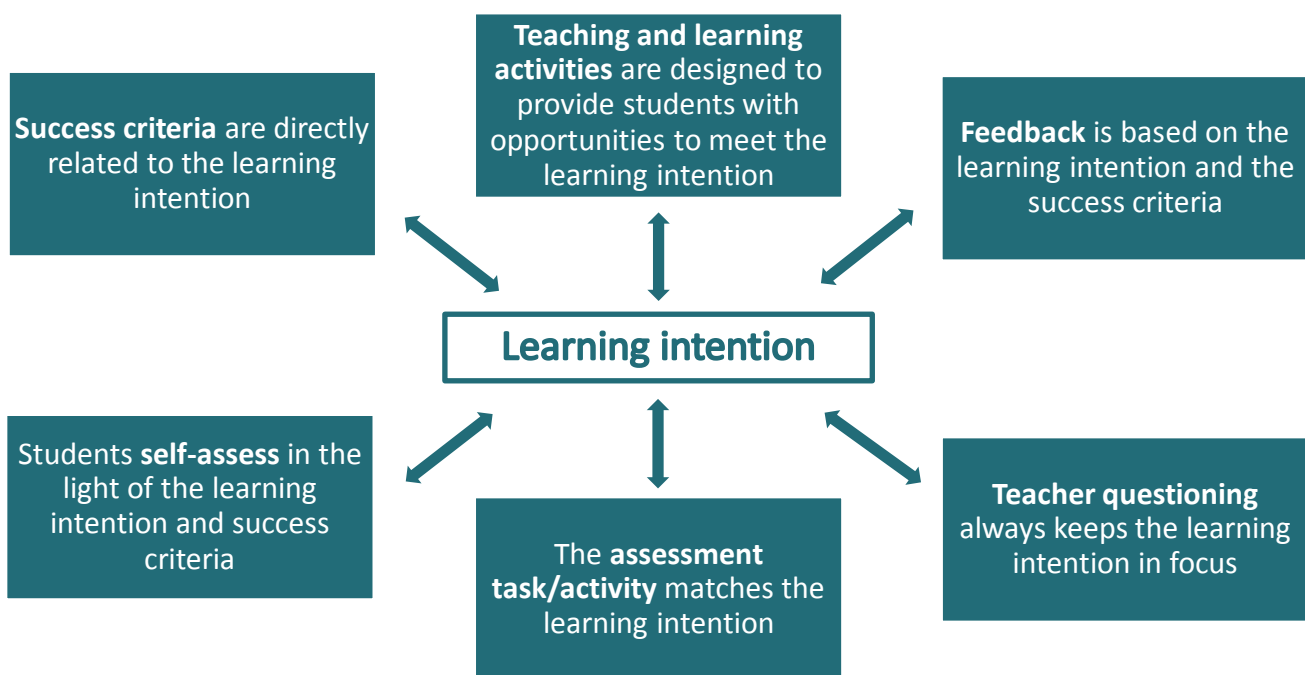
- focused for longer periods of time
- motivated
- involved in and responsible for their learning.

Tips for sharing learning intentions/goals

- Where possible give a real life rationale for the learning.
- Ask students to think about where else they could use the learning.
- Display the learning intention so that it can be referred to it during the lesson and reflection.
- Use a flip chart to build up the specific learning intentions and show students how they are progressing towards the global learning intention.
- Have students record the learning intention in a journal or learning log.
- Make a laminated wall chart to display the learning intention/goal that can be changed each day.

The importance of learning intentions/goals

The following diagram from the Assessment for Learning website (Curriculum Corporation) summarises the important role of learning intentions/goals.



References

Education Services Australia (n.d.). *Assessment for Learning*. Retrieved May 1, 2014, from Background: <http://www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au>