Alignment Overview
ASLI 2011

Teaching and Learning Cycle
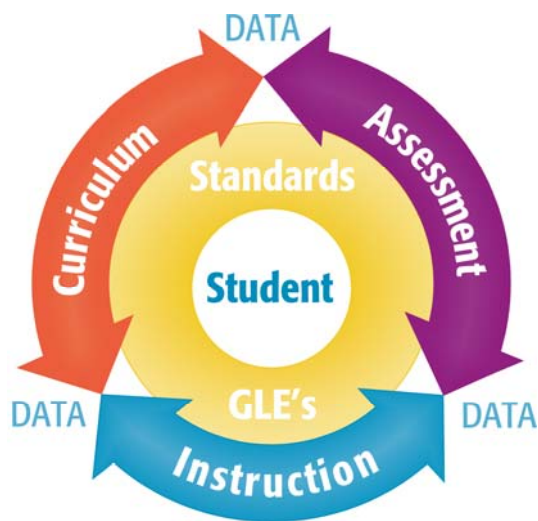
Standards-Based Education Means…

- The focus is on <u>student learning.</u>
- <u>Expectations</u> are the same for all students.
- Learning targets are <u>aligned</u> to standards.
- Standards are expressed through <u>essential knowledge and skills.</u>
- <u>Assessment</u> is used to guide and modify the instruction.
- The effectiveness of instruction is reflected in how the students <u>meet the standard.</u>
- <u>Instructional strategies</u> provide opportunities for students to learn expectations outlined in the standards and curriculum.

Reviewing the Standards and Assessment Connection

What Do We Want Students to Know and Be Able to Do?

- Learning Targets:
  Specific goals and objectives based on the standards

- Criteria for Success:
  What does it take to be successful and what does success look like?

Learning Targets:

How do they relate to curriculum and instruction?

- Provides clarity for both the teacher and student of what it looks like to meet learning expectations as outlined in the standards.

- Written in language students, parents and teachers clearly understand.

- Used to plan instruction.

- Shared with students in advance of teaching a lesson, doing an activity, or giving an assignment.

Sharing Learning Targets with Students

How is performance toward standards demonstrated at the classroom level?


What Constitutes Effective Classroom Assessment?

Assessment that:

- ❑ provides evidence of student performance relative to content and performance standards
- ❑ Matches the classroom instruction.
- ❑ provides teachers and students with insight into student errors and misunderstanding
- ❑ helps lead the teacher directly to action

	Formative → Summative			
Type	Classroom Formative	Classroom Summative	District-Level Summative	State/National Summative
When	Daily	Unit Monthly Weekly	Monthly Semester Trimester	Annually
Purpose	Student and teacher feedback towards ongoing learning	Determining grades, achievement toward proficiency of standards	Identify groups of at-risk students; used for determining PD, programmatic needs	Accountability, rank, and school improvement goals
What	Sharing criteria, questioning, self assessments, observations, descriptive feedback, using peers as resources.	Teacher-developed and/or curriculum embedded; end-of-unit tests, projects, performance tasks	Common, benchmark, interim, including NWEA, MAPPS, Aims Web, District-created, Pre/post tests, and/or writing samples collected at the district level	Examples: SBA, ACT, SAT, NAEP, TIMMS

Assessment as Instructional Feedback
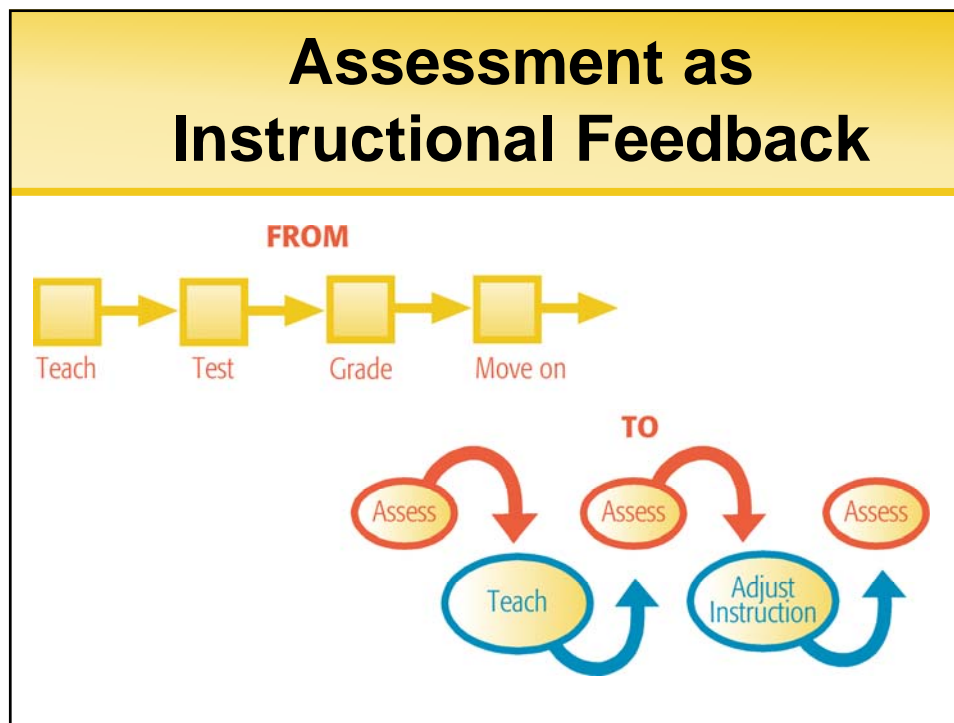
The Research….

After examining 175 teacher-made tests written for students in grades K-12, Marso and Pigge (2009) found that the most frequent type of item was multiple choice (83%) and that the mean number of items per test was 37.9.

Seventy-two percent of all the items were written at the knowledge level. In fact, when looking at tests written for subjects other than math, almost all of the items (95-100%) were written at the knowledge level.

Action Words Found in Standards

Describe	Explain	Identify
Illustrate	Trace	Compare
Contrast	Predict	Apply
Sort	Justify	Analyze
Evaluate	Discuss	Define
List	Differentiate	Distinguish
Defend	Conclude	Categorize

Where is the Rigor???

Why Depth of Knowledge?

- Mechanism to ensure that the intent of the standard and the level of student demonstration required by that standard matches the assessment items
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires assessments to "measure the depth and breadth of the state academic content standards for a given grade level"
- Provides cognitive processing ceiling (highest level students can be assessed) for item development
- <u>Not the same as difficulty</u>

Teaching Does Not Equal Learning

"Learning can and often does take place without the benefit of teaching—and sometimes in spite of it—but there is no such thing as effective teaching in the absence of learning."

Angelo & Cross, 1993

What Students Need to Learn Pages 66-69

Knowing Your Learning Target

Connie M. Moss, Susan M. Brookhart and Beverly A. Long

The first thing students need to learn is what they're supposed to be learning.

One of Toni Taladay's students walked into Lenape Elementary School wearing a colorful tie-dyed shirt with a tiny bull's-eye shape in the lower front corner. That small design caught the eye of his classmate, who exclaimed, "Look, Joey, you're wearing a learning target!" In the Armstrong School District in southwestern Pennsylvania, learning targets are everywhere: in lesson plans, on bulletin boards, in hallways—and as this story illustrates—firmly on students' minds.

What Is a Shared Learning Target?

If you own a global positioning system (GPS), you probably can't imagine taking a trip without it. Unlike a printed map, a GPS provides up-to-the-minute information about where you are, the distance to your destination, how long until you get there, and exactly what to do when you make a wrong turn. But a GPS can't do any of that without a precise description of where you want to go.

Think of shared learning targets in the same way. They convey to students the destination for the lesson—what to learn, how deeply to learn it, and exactly how to demonstrate their new learning. In our estimation (Moss & Brookhart, 2009) and that of others (Seidle, Rimmele, & Prenzel, 2005; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2009), the intention for the lesson is one of the most important things students should learn. Without a precise description of where they are headed, too many students are "flying blind."

The Dangers of Flying Blind

No matter what we decide students need to learn, not much will happen until students understand what they are supposed to learn during a lesson and set their sights on learning it. Regardless of how important the content, how engaging the activity, how formative the assessment, or how differentiated the instruction, unless *all students* see, recognize, and understand the learning target from the very beginning of the lesson, one factor will remain constant: The teacher will always be the only one providing the direction, focusing on getting students to meet the instructional objectives. The students, on the other hand, will focus on doing what the teacher says, rather than on learning. This flies in the face of what we know about nurturing motivated, self-regulated, and intentional learners (Zimmerman, 2001).

Students who don't know the intention of a lesson expend precious time and energy trying to figure out what their teachers expect them to learn. And many students, exhausted by the process, wonder why they should even care.

Consider the following high school lesson on *Jane Eyre*. The teacher begins by saying,

> Today, as you read the next chapter, carefully complete your study guide. Pay close attention to the questions about Bertha— Mr. Rochester's first wife. Questions 16 through 35 deal with lunacy and the five categories of mental illness. The next 15 questions focus on facts about Charlotte Brontë's own isolated childhood. The last 10 items ask you to define terms in the novel that we seldom use today—your dictionaries will help you define those words. All questions on Friday's test will come directly from the study guide.

What is important for students to learn in this lesson? Is it how to carefully complete a study guide, the five types of mental illness, facts about Brontë's childhood, meanings of seldom-used words, or facts about Mr. Rochester's first wife? Your guess is as good as ours.

Constructing a Learning Target

A shared learning target unpacks a "lesson-sized" amount of learning—the precise "chunk" of the particular content students are to master (Leahy, Lyon, Thompson, & Wiliam, 2005). It describes exactly how well we expect them to learn it and how we will ask them to demonstrate that learning. And although teachers derive them from instructional objectives, learning targets differ from instructional objectives in both design and function.

Instructional objectives are about instruction, derived from content standards, written in teacher language, and used to guide teaching during a lesson or across a series of lessons. They are not designed for students but for the teacher. A shared learning target, on the other hand, frames the lesson from the students' point of view. A shared learning target helps students grasp the lesson's purpose—why it is crucial to learn this chunk of information, on this day, and in this way.

Students can't see, recognize, and understand what they need to learn until we translate the learning intention into developmentally appropriate, student-friendly, and

culturally respectful language. One way to do that is to answer the following three questions from the student's point of view:

1. What will I be able to do when I've finished this lesson?

2. What idea, topic, or subject is important for me to learn and understand so that I can do this?

3. How will I show that I can do this, and how well will I have to do it?

The online-only figure at www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/el_201103_brookhart_figure1.pdf illustrates this process with examples for younger and older students. Carefully tailor your descriptions to your students' unique developmental levels, cultures, and experiences. A learning target should convey to *your* students what today's lesson should mean *for them*.

Beginning to Share

When teachers in the Armstrong School District began sharing learning targets with their students, their early efforts were tentative and in consistent. Not all teachers tried it, and some who tried did not share targets for every lesson. Some simply paraphrased instructional objectives, wrote the target statements on the board, or told students what they were going to learn at the beginning of a lesson. Yet, even their exploratory attempts became game changers. When teachers consistently shared learning targets in meaningful ways, students quickly became more capable decision makers who knew where they were headed and who shared responsibility for getting there.

At Lenape Elementary School, for example, teachers and administrators marveled at the immediate effect of shared targets and how quickly those effects multiplied. Principal Tom Dinga recalls a visit to a 1st grade classroom during the first week of sharing learning targets. The teacher, Brian Kovalovsky, led the class in discussing the learning target for the math lesson that day—to describe basic shapes and compare them to one another. When he asked his students how they would know when they hit that target, one 6-year-old replied, "I'll be able to explain the difference between a square and a rectangle."

Invigorated by the changes they were witnessing, teachers and administrators used e-mail, peer coaching, peer observations, focused walk-throughs, and professional conversations to share what was working in their classrooms and buildings and supported these claims with evidence that their students were learning more and learning smarter.

Students are now more actively engaged in their lessons as full-fledged learning partners. Because they understand exactly what they are supposed to learn, students take a more strategic approach to their work. Students have the information they need to keep track of how well a strategy is working, and they can decide when and if to use that strategy again. In other words, students not only know where they are on the way to mastery, but also are aware of what it will take to get there.

The Power of Meaningful Sharing

Learning targets have no inherent power. They enhance student learning and achievement only when educators commit to consistently and intentionally sharing them with students. Meaningful sharing requires that teachers use the learning targets with their students and students use them with one another. This level of sharing starts when teachers use student-friendly language—and sometimes model or demonstrate what they expect—to explain the learning target from the beginning of the lesson, and when they continue to share it throughout the lesson. Here are two powerful ways to do that.

Designing a Strong Performance of Understanding

The single best way to share a learning target is to create a strong *performance of understanding*—a learning experience that embodies the learning target. When students complete the actions that are part of a strong performance of understanding, they and their teachers will know that they have reached the target.

When introducing the lesson, the teacher should explicitly share the learning target for the day and explain how each of the tasks that are part of the lesson will lead students toward that target. Remember the lesson on *Jane Eyre*? Consider this lesson introduction:

> Today we will learn more about how Brontë uses her characters to explore the theme of being unwanted. Remember, a theme is an underlying meaning of the story. Yesterday, we examined Jane Eyre's life experiences as they relate to the theme of being unwanted. Today we will do the same for Adele, Mr. Rochester's ward. As you read, find examples of Adele being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, or forgotten. Then, in your learning groups, discuss your examples and your reasons for choosing them. At the end of class, use your notes to draft a short paragraph that answers the question, How does the character of Adele deepen Brontë's theme of being unwanted in the novel *Jane Eyre*?

Note how the teacher explains what students will learn that day and how each task explicitly connects to that target. If students perform all of these actions, they will better understand how Brontë uses her characters to explore the theme of being unwanted. The tasks clearly lead students to the target, and the students can see how each task leads them to their goal. A strong performance of understanding helps students understand what is important to learn, provides experiences that will help them learn it, and gives them a chance to observe their growing competence along the way.

Explaining the Criteria for Success

Success criteria are developmentally appropriate descriptions and concrete examples of what success in a lesson looks like. They are not the grades students should earn, the number of problems they must get right, or the number of times they should include something in a performance or product (for example, how many descriptive adjectives they should include in a paragraph).

"I can" statements, like those pictured on p. 67, are a great way to explain success. Another useful strategy is to ask students to examine work samples that represent various levels of quality and discuss what makes some samples better than others. Teachers can also use rubrics to define the elements of a successful performance or product and describe various performance levels for each element. An especially powerful way to do this is to have students apply a rubric's organized criteria to work samples with various levels of quality. Then ask students to explain their decisions using the language in the rubric. When students know the success criteria, they can be mindful of what success looks like as they use the rubric to guide their learning.

Empowering Every Student

Armstrong teachers began embedding learning targets into their lessons in October 2009. Now, almost a year and one-half later, shared learning targets guide lesson planning, formative assessment, and classroom walk-throughs. But the most impressive transformation is that of students into full learning partners. Now that students know where they are going, they are more motivated to do the work to get there.

It's just this simple. Do we want classrooms full of empowered, self-regulated, highly motivated, and intentional learners? If we do, then it is time to own up to the obstacles that educators create by withholding the very information that would empower learners. Students cannot regulate learning, use thoughtful reasoning processes, set meaningful goals, or assess the quality of their own work unless they understand what success looks like in today's lesson.

References

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