Pivot
Transforming teaching practice

Survey Question	8. This teacher pushes me to set challenging learning goals

| Australian Professional Standard | Professional Knowledge Domain
Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it
Focus areas:
• 2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the content area
• 2.2 Content selection and organisation
• 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
• 3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs |

| What does this sound like in the classroom? | "This class is hard, but worth the hard work. We set our own targets and then work towards achieving them. Our tests are different depending on what level we are working at. So we all get to do the kind of work that suits us." |

| Why is this important? | The idea of stretching students to the edge (or beyond) their level of capability was initially highlighted by Vygotsky and his work on the zone of proximal development.

Learning goals, or learning intentions, are what the student should be able to do, understand, and care about as a result of the teaching (Hattie, 2009). Goals may be short-term (for a lesson, or part of a lesson) or longer-term over a series of lessons (Hattie, 2012). A lesson learning objective is a statement that describes what a student will be able to do successfully and independently at the end of a specific lesson as a result of the teaching in the lesson (Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2009). Correctly designed learning intentions drive the entire lesson.

Research shows that setting learning goals has an above average impact on student achievement (Visible Learning, 2015). They help both teacher and student. They help the teacher focus on the relevant concepts and skills, and measure whether students achieve the outcome of the lesson. They help the student understand exactly what they are learning and provide explicit expectations about what to aim for (Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2009; NSW DEC, 2014). This can increase both teachers' and students' attention and motivation to succeed (Hattie, 2012).

Learning intentions need to be both well-designed and well-delivered to students (Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2009). They should be appropriately challenging and lessons should be structured around students reaching the goals, which means the plan related to learning intentions may need to be |

adapted to different student learning rates and starting points (Hattie, 2012). There needs to be a shift from a deficit model (teaching lower-order skills) to a developmental approach (encouraging higher-order thinking). It is important that classrooms ensure a place for challenging students to push themselves to achieve.

Learning intentions should be used with success criteria and feedback to students on their progress in achieving their goals.

Setting challenging learning goals is an important skill for all students to master. When students are assisted to delve into their own thinking and learning processes, they are drawn to think about the effectiveness of the strategies they used to achieve the learning goals they set (DEV, 2007). Planning what to do, monitoring progress towards achieving it and evaluating the outcome can help students take more control over their thinking and learning processes and equip them with learning to learn skills (DEV, 2007).

Research by Carol Dweck (1989) has shown that children with learning goals tend to choose challenging tasks regardless of their ability; they take every opportunity to get better; they quickly generate possible strategies for mastering a task and persist in finding answers; and in the case of failure, students' self-esteem remains unaffected.

Some pilot research has suggested that with a data-driven, evidence-based approach to teaching and learning, teachers could manipulate the learning environment and scaffold learning for every student, regardless of the student's development or intellectual capacity (Griffin, 2007). Merely having and using tests is, on its own, an insufficient condition to inform teaching and improve learning (Halverson, Grigg, Pritchett, & Thomas, 2005). It is when the data is utilised (such as formative, standardised assessment) that it can provide sufficient information to profile students' learning and to identify the zone of intervention for individual students (Griffin, 2012).

1. Show them what it's like in Year 12. Take an example of the coursework from a higher year level (quiz, assessment or even the final exam) to get students thinking about the distance between (their) A and the (final) B. Ensure that the conversation is supportive and does not create unnecessary anxiety within the class.
2. Be the Socratic gadfly: Mimic the practice of the gadfly, which nips away at larger animals. This involves asking lots of little questions intended to push thinking and avoid sloppiness: "What do you mean by that?"; "But, what if…?"; "What evidence do you have?"; "Does that always apply?"; "How can you be certain that is true?". This may precipitate a goal-setting session for the students.
3. Plunge your pupils into the realms of uncertainty from time to time. This helps to keep their thinking sharp and stops them getting complacent. Use content aimed at pupils who are two or three years

older, that requires a high level of interpretation or challenges their beliefs (Gershon, 2013).

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?	Ask a colleague to observe your class and how the students respond to opportunities for comment. This may be as simple as giving your colleague a copy of your class roll on which they can 'tally' the number of times each student speaks or puts their hand up in your class. They may be able to identify students who are feeling engaged in the learning activities and safely contribute to discussion. You may wish to ask individual students after class to ascertain why they are reluctant to contribute and seek to work with them to remedy this.
Where can I find out more?	Video • Circle time – setting challenging learning goals (AITSL) Referenced articles, books and other great reads: • Gershon, M. (2013) How to stretch and challenge your students. TES, 18/6/2013. Accessed 16 May 2015. • Griffin, P. (2007). The comfort of competence and the uncertainty of assessment. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 33, 87–99. • Griffin, P. (2012) Assessment and Learning Partnerships: The influence of teaching strategies on student achievement in higher order skills. Accessed June 2015 • Halverson, R., Grigg, J., Prichett, R., & Thomas, C. (2005). The New Instructional Leadership: Creating Data-Driven Instructional Systems in Schools (WCER Working Paper No. 2005-9). Madison: University of Wisconsin Center for Education. • Hattie, J.C. (2009), Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement. London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis. • Dweck, C (1989). Motivation. In A. Lesgold & R. Glaser (Eds.) *Foundations for a Psychology of Education.* Hillsdale NJ: Erlbaum. • Department of Education, Victoria (DEV) (2007) Developing, Monitoring and Reporting Personal Learning Goals, 29 November 2006. Accessed 15 June 2015