

### Survey Question

### 21. I understand how my work will be assessed in this class

#### Australian Professional Standard

#### Professional Practice Domain

Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and reporting on student learning

#### Focus areas:

- 5.1 Assess student learning
- 5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning
- 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements
- 2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting

#### What does this sound like in the classroom?

"This teacher tells us about all the different parts of the assessment, so I know what I have to do. They show us how we can break the big job into smaller tasks, and sometimes, as a class, we even write our own criteria to be marked on."

#### Why is this important?

Ensuring students know how they will be assessed is a powerful tool to improve student learning (Hattie, 2009; Hattie, 2013).

Success criteria are statements used to explain to students how the teacher is going to judge their performance, and when or whether they have been successful (Hattie, 2009; Hattie, 2013). They describe in specific terms what successful attainment of the learning goals looks like (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). They should reflect the expectations, characteristics or qualities of student's performance and provide a common understanding of what contributes to success in learning in specific, student-appropriate language. They could be in the format of a checklist, rubric, task sheet or student self-assessment of learning (WRDSB Learning Services, 2013).

Students who understand success criteria are more engaged (Block & Burns, 1976) and improve achievement (Rust, Price, & O'Donovan, 2003; Cohen, 1987). Success criteria can help students recognise strong performance, identify problems in weak performance and use the criteria to change and improve performance (Arter & Spandel, 1992).

Students who understand the success criteria and succeed in them may develop higher confidence in their ability leading to better learning practices (Dweck, 1986; Ames & Archer, 1988). Success criteria help students enhance self-directed learning and identify the next steps in their own learning. Students can use success criteria to deconstruct work during the learning process and stay focused on the end-point learning goals, monitor their progression of learning, give, receive and respond to teacher and peer

feedback, and identify and clarify learning targets.

Students should be involved in developing the criteria as they are more likely to understand what is expected of them, buy-in to the task and then accomplish it successfully (Gregory, Cameron & Davies, 1997).

**What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?**

Success criteria should state as exactly as possible what the students and teachers will want to see. Effective success criteria are (WRDSB Learning Services, 2013):

- Expressed in clear and specific language that is understood by students;
- Clearly show students how to demonstrate all they have learned at the end of a task or topic;
- Can be modified during the task or topic or extended depending on student needs;
- Enable differentiation in process or product to meet individual student needs;
- Are constructed with students to enhance understanding and lead to greater levels of success.

Worked examples are an effective form of explaining to students how they will be assessed (Hattie, 2009). Worked examples consist of the problem statement and the relevant steps to the solution. They help students to focus on the processes of getting to a correct answer, not just providing an answer (Hattie, 2009).

Teachers can use success criteria to develop teaching points and determine the focus of learning, develop assessment tasks and tools, focus conversations during student conferences and feedback, and offer structure and consistency for assessment. Teachers should share and discuss success criteria with students from the start of any new task or unit of work and should revisit them regularly with students throughout the instructional period (WRDSB Learning Services, 2013).

Teachers need to co-construct effective success criteria with students. This involves having conversations with students to deconstruct worked examples, understand the criteria and apply them to realistic examples. Simply providing students with an assessment rubric or task sheet that lists success criteria may not mean they understand what is expected of them (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

**What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?**

1. Check that students understand the success criteria or rubric that you are currently using.
2. Ensure that you are 'teaching to the success criteria' so that students can focus on essential learning.
3. Tailor success criteria/rubrics for future assessments.

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?

Liaise with fellow subject teachers to ensure consistent success criteria across topics taught. Review success criteria together and discuss methods of teaching to them.

Where can I find out more?

Video:

- Edugains: Learning Goals and Success Criteria Video Library
- John Hattie: Learning Goals and Success Criteria

Referenced articles, books and other great reads:

- Ames, C. & Archer, J. (1988) Achievement Goals in the Classroom: Students' Learning Strategies and Motivation Process, *Journal of Educational Psychology*.
- Arter, J. & Spandel, V. (1992) Using portfolios of student work in instruction and assessment, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.
- Block, J. & Burns, R. (1976) Mastery Learning, *Review of Research in Education*.
- Cohen, A. (1987) Instructional Alignment: Searching for a Magic Bullet. *Educational Researcher*.
- Dweck, C. (1986) Motivational Processes Affecting Learning. *American Psychologist*.
- Gregory, K., Cameron, C. & Davies, C. (1997) Conferencing and Reporting: Knowing What Counts.
- Hattie, J. (2013) *Visible Learning for Teachers*. Routledge Taylor & Francis.
- Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. Routledge.
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) *Growing Success, Assessment Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools*. Accessed 1 May 2015.
- Rust, C., Price, M. & O'Donovan, B. (2003) Improving Students' Learning by Developing their Understanding of Assessment Criteria and Processes, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*.
- WRDSB Learning Services, (2013) *Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Handbook*. Accessed 2 May 2015.
- Clark, L. (2015) *Examples of Learning Goals and Success Criteria*: Accessed 3 May 2015.