

Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to
Accelerate Student
Learning

Companion Guide

Chapter 8: Intentional Step One



Chapter 8

Intentional Step One: Establish Clear Learning Intentions

Successful direct instruction begins with clear learning intentions. These statements give teachers a target to aim for and help them decide what needs to be included in the lesson and what can be left out. According to John Hattie, students already know 60% of what's taught in a typical lesson. Creating lessons with intentional focus ensures teachers are delivering relevant content and skills (Catholic, 2013).

Learning intentions set the scene and explain the purpose of the lesson. They also help the teacher choose appropriate questions, activities, and assessments. Effective learning intentions provide students with a clear understanding of what they're learning so they can focus on the activity or task. They will also take ownership of their learning because the end point and the steps to get there are evident.

Effective learning intentions should be student-centered, concise, and match the learning level of the students. Student-centered intentions focus on what the students will be doing rather than what the teacher is teaching. These statements should be brief (typically one or two sentences), comprehensible, and clearly outline what is expected of students. Prior to writing the intentions, teachers should assess students' levels of thinking and match the objectives appropriately using Bloom's Taxonomy.

Sample Learning Intentions:

- Students will be able to recognize and identify root words.
- Students will be able to use a multiplication grid.

Teachers should share their learning intentions with students prior to giving the lesson. Again, this is another practical and manageable way we can impact our students' achievement

(Catholic Education, 2013). Sharing lesson goals might involve writing them on the board, but teachers must also discuss those goals with students and refer back to them throughout the lesson. Knowing the objectives sets clear expectations, guides students as they move through the lesson, and gives them a sense of purpose, all of which helps improve student learning.

Strategy 1: Activate Prior Knowledge

Before delivering the lesson, teachers can invite students to recall what they already know and/or learned in a previous lesson. Teachers might use Entry Tickets, journal entries, or show a short video. For more strategies to activate prior knowledge, see Chapter 11.

Strategy 2: Reflection Questions

Another strategy teachers can utilize is reflection questions. These questions are specific to the learning intention and encourage students to think about their progress.

Reflection Questions:

- What steps are you taking to reach the learning intention? How are you measuring your progress?
- What strategies have helped you be successful along the way? Why were they successful?
- How does this lesson connect to what you already know and can do?

Reflection questions related to the learning intentions helps build on students' prior knowledge and skills and allow teachers to evaluate student readiness before the lesson (Kurt, 2022). They also help students think through the steps to be successful and recognize their potential for success. This kind of reflection promotes self-awareness, self-management, and

self-efficacy (.92).