

Useful success criteria can take many forms, but they must do two things really well: they must fit the performance of understanding, and they must make effective teaching and meaningful learning visible. Strong criteria precisely describe what good work looks like for the specific performance of understanding in the lesson. It makes perfect sense. We designed the performance of understanding by considering the learning intention—the specific content plus the potential learning trajectory for the lesson—and the learning target.

Make sure to frame and organize the success criteria from the students' point of view. For younger students, "I can" statements are particularly useful, but they also help older students. Sometimes one-sentence "I can" statements are sufficient as criteria; sometimes an organized set of "I can" statements is needed to provide students with the most useful description of success (e.g., "I can create a product with all the attributes in this rubric").

The best form for expressing the criteria depends on the learning target and the specific performance of understanding you designed to make that learning target visible. First, decide whether your learning target is comprehension of a concept or term, demonstration of a discrete skill, creation of a complex product, demonstration of a complex process, or use of critical reasoning. Then you will know whether you can use simple "I can" statements to communicate criteria for success to your students or whether you need a more complex format—like rubrics, exemplars, demonstrations, or guided questions—to communicate the criteria. Figure 3.2 illustrates how to organize and express success criteria for various types of performances of understanding.

Now that you have the "big three" in place—the learning target, the performance of understanding, and the success criteria—you can use their combined power to share learning targets and success criteria for today's lesson in different ways.

## **SHARING THE LEARNING TARGET AND SUCCESS CRITERIA VERBALLY**

Verbally sharing the learning target and success criteria means more than simply telling students what to do in the lesson. To be effective, the language we use must be descriptive, specific, developmentally appropriate, and student-friendly. And it must

3.2 Tailoring the Criteria for Success to the Performance of Understanding		
If the performance of understanding involves . . .	Examples	Then useful criteria for success might be . . .
Grasping a new concept or term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science: weather front, DNA, ecosystem.</li> <li>• Social studies: state capitals, government, imperialism, urbanization.</li> <li>• Language arts: parts of speech, nonfiction, root word.</li> <li>• Mathematics: integer, volume, estimation, prediction.</li> <li>• Music: tempo, timbre, controlled breathing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organized as “I can” statements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can explain [concept or term] in my own words.</li> <li>• I can give examples of what [concept or term] is and examples of what [concept or term] is not.</li> <li>• I can use [concept or term] to analyze a situation [or text, or data] or to solve a problem.</li> </ul>
Demonstrating a discrete skill—a brief, well-defined action that has a clear beginning and end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphing a quadratic equation.</li> <li>• Shooting a free throw.</li> <li>• Forming a contraction.</li> <li>• Changing a sentence from passive to active voice.</li> <li>• Measuring the circumference of a circle.</li> <li>• Tying my shoe.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organized as an “I can” statements checklist of important elements, steps, or rules of the skill:</b></p> <p>I can change a passive sentence into an active sentence by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turning the object of the passive sentence into the “star,” or the subject, of the active sentence.</li> <li>• Removing the “to be” form, “en,” or “ed” from the passive verb to make it an active verb.</li> <li>• Turning the subject of the passive sentence into the direct object of the active sentence.</li> </ul>

*continued*

3.2 Tailoring the Criteria for Success to the Performance of Understanding ( <i>continued</i> )		
If the performance of understanding involves . . .	Examples	Then useful criteria for success might be . . .
Creating a complex product or demonstrating a complex process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a descriptive paragraph.</li> <li>• Participating in a debate.</li> <li>• Creating a PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>• Planting a terrarium.</li> <li>• Outlining a book chapter.</li> <li>• Demonstrating how to call 911.</li> <li>• Giving an informative speech.</li> <li>• Writing a piece of fan fiction.</li> <li>• Writing a letter to my state congressperson.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organized as a rubric:</b> I can [write a piece of fan fiction, plant a terrarium] according to the descriptions in the rubric.</p> <p><b>Embodied in examples of good work:</b> I can [write a descriptive paragraph, create a PowerPoint presentation] that is as good as this one because . . .</p> <p><b>Demonstrated through expert modeling of the process:</b> I can [give an informative speech, call 911] just as well as [modeler of process] did because . . .</p>
Using critical, creative, or self-regulatory reasoning processes and thinking skills to maximize the quality of a performance or product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classifying the eight planets in an original way.</li> <li>• Describing the similarities and differences between prose and poetry.</li> <li>• Writing an essay that argues for wind power over fossil fuels.</li> <li>• Identifying the general pattern of a song and then finding songs that share that pattern.</li> <li>• Setting three goals for improving my diet.</li> <li>• Inventing a better way to line up for the bus.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organized as guiding questions for the reasoning process:</b> I can use my best thinking to classify the planets by asking myself these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can I identify the things I am going to classify?</li> <li>• Can I name something important that these things have in common and use it to create a category?</li> <li>• Can I state the rule that describes what the things in this group have in common?</li> <li>• Is there anything that does not belong to this group? Can I make another category for some of the things that do not belong?</li> </ul>

be stated from the point of view of a student who has not yet mastered the learning target. Two strategies promote effective verbal sharing: the Four-Step Framework and the I-Can Framework. A third strategy—listening to students as they paraphrase the target—deepens student understanding when used in conjunction with either oral sharing framework.

### The Four-Step Framework

This framework employs a set of “starter prompts” that unpack the learning target, performance of understanding, and success criteria from the student’s point of view (see Figure 3.3, p. 52). The successive steps of the framework outline what students will learn during today’s lesson, explain what they will do to learn it, describe what they will look for to know they are doing good work, and make the target relevant by connecting it to the potential learning trajectory, future academic learning, or real-world applications.

The four starter prompts of the framework are

- We are learning to . . .
- We will show that we can do this by . . .
- To know how well we are learning this, we will look for . . .
- It is important for us to learn this (or be able to do this) because . . .

We’ll use a 3rd grade language arts lesson to illustrate how the four prompts work together to share the learning target with students. The teacher’s learning target for the lesson is “Students will learn how to sequence the four main events of a story.”

**Step 1. Explain the learning target in student-friendly, developmentally appropriate terms:** *We are learning to* put the four most important events of a story we read into the exact order they happened in the story to answer the question “What happened first, second, third, and last?”

**Step 2. Describe the performance of understanding:** *We will show that we can do this by* placing pictures of the four important events from the story in the exact order we remember them happening.

**Step 3. Describe the student look-fors:** *To know how well we are learning this, we will look for* the match between the order of our pictures and the sequence of events in the story as we reread it.

3.3 The Four-Step Framework	
The learning target for today's lesson: _____	
Steps	What the Teacher Says
<b>Step 1:</b> Explain the learning target in student-friendly, developmentally appropriate terms.	We are learning to . . .
<b>Step 2:</b> Describe the performance of understanding.	We will show that we can do this by . . .
<b>Step 3:</b> Describe the student look-fors.	To know how well we are learning this, we will look for . . .
<b>Step 4:</b> Make it relevant.	It is important for us to learn this because . . .

**Step 4. Make it relevant:** *It is important for us to be able to put what happens in a story in the right order because it helps us understand and remember stories and books we read. It will help us in our next lesson when we learn how to write our own stories. Knowing and remembering the order of important events also helps us learn science, history, math, and other subjects in school. It is a skill we will use for the rest of our lives, no matter what we do when we grow up. Doctors, detectives, teachers, mechanics, musicians, chefs, and many others must know and follow the exact order of things.*

### The I-Can Framework

This strategy pairs a description of the learning target with an “I can” statement that describes the performance of understanding for today’s lesson and translates the