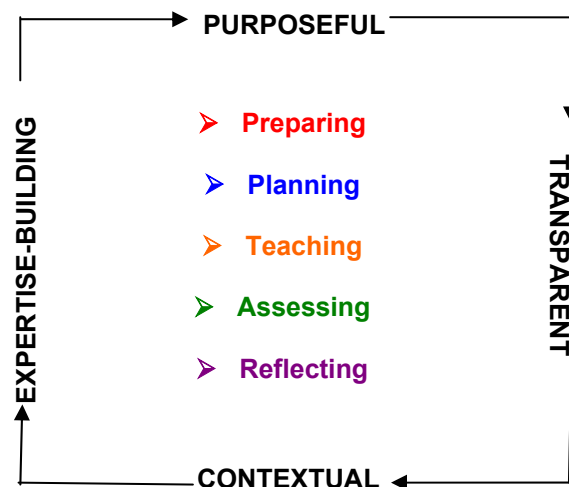


# What Learning Looks Like

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Standards-based instruction is an approach to teaching focused on clear statements about what students need to know and be able to do. These statements, or standards, are the goals that make instruction explicit and provide opportunities for students to learn and practice the standards proficiently. Just as standards provide the knowledge and skills of instruction, so do the standards provide the focus of assessment when it is time to measure learning gains. This is how the standards can be used for aligning curriculum, instruction, assessment and reporting with important learner and accountability goals.



Teachers and students can use the same information to understand “what learning looks like” while they capture evidence of performance during learning activities. With sound instructional planning focused on a standard, teachers can embed assessment within instruction. Students now have a clear understanding of the learning benchmarks and exactly what outcomes they are being asked to produce. Using the teaching and learning cycle as a guide, teachers will identify the type of evidence early in the instructional process and the best ways of collection for the portfolio. This helps assure that assessment activities will provide meaningful and useful information about actual instructional outcomes -- because what is taught and learned is the same as what is assessed.

Describing the teaching and learning cycle --

## ➤ Preparing

- *If working individually*
  - Determine learner’s goals or purposes and prior knowledge about the area of interest.
  - Identify the Standard that will help the learner achieve his/her goals and the learner’s prior knowledge about the Standards.
- *If working with a group,*
  - Determine a shared goal or purpose and determine group’s prior knowledge about area of interest.
  - Identify the Standard that will help the group achieve their shared goal and the group’s prior knowledge about the Standards.

*Preparation* is the anchor for the teaching and learning cycle and makes explicit the purposes students have for returning to school and grounds all the instruction that follows. Being clear about goals and the skills needed to reach those goals supports a purposeful and transparent learning approach.

**Determine Goals** Effective goal-setting is a complex process of identifying long-term goals and short-term steps to reaching that goal, exploring adult roles and responsibilities, and beginning to take responsibility for learning. By either working individually or in a group, the strategy of sharing and discussing possibilities with peers is important as students build and refine their goals.

**Identify Standard** After students have clearly identified a learning goal, the next step of the teaching cycle involves the selection of a standard. This is an important step in the standards-based process because it highlights the difference between a curriculum that prepares students to carry out a particular goal and one that only develops the underlying skill competency. By focusing on a standard, students develop skill expertise that can transfer to new and changing needs. The challenge for educators is to focus on a standard without separating (decontextualizing) it from real-world goals. In this step, we are identifying the standards that relate to individual students’ goals. Even if we work with large classes, we still want to know which skills our individual students need in order to achieve their own purposes. This is information that will help us make instructional choices and be accountable to our students.

**Determine Prior Knowledge** During this time, the teacher will be gaining information about what the student(s) know about the particular area of interest

they have chosen to study and also what they know about the process of reading, writing, or math. Standardized and authentic testing, as well as questioning and informal surveys should be used to guide the teacher in this phase.

<p>➤ <b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Design a learning activity to address real-life concerns of the learner(s).</li> <li>○ Identify or develop a method of assessment to capture evidence and report learning.</li> </ul>	<p>In developing the <i>plan</i>, you will need to consider the kinds of activities needed to reach the students’ goal, the Standard chosen to focus the activity, the scaffolding or supports needed, and the learning strategies students will use during the activity.</p> <p><b>Address Real-life Concerns</b> Since learning is a social process, the group needs to plan and work together on ways to focus activities around a shared priority. Contextual instruction in real activities supports the transfer of learning to other areas of students’ lives. It is also important for students to understand how this shared priority promotes their individual goals. Finding ways to cluster individual goals into group ones or linking common concerns back to individual needs, the teacher is instrumental in being transparent or explicit about how these activities will help the students develop the skills needed to meet their own goals and purposes.</p> <p><b>Assessment Methods</b> Performance-based assessment is a valuable tool for the measurement of adult learning. Some advantages include a stronger link between instruction and assessment, determines student progress, more meaningful connections between classroom activities and the outside world, and greater emphasis on content learning, problem-solving, self-reflection, and interpersonal skills. Observing and documenting the dimensions of performance (knowledge, fluency, independence, and range) is one way to embed assessment.</p> <p><b>Capture Evidence</b> When developing activities, the teacher and student determine ahead of time the outcome of the lesson by describing the activity in an objective way. The product of the activity can then be used for the portfolio. Remember, the learner must complete all the components of the standard (not necessarily all the benchmarks) in order to say they have “performed” the standard.</p>
<p>➤ <b>Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Carry out the learning activity.</li> </ul>	<p>Although teachers arrive at this point with a carefully crafted lesson, it is important to remain flexible as the lesson evolves while monitoring learner’s skills, knowledge and abilities. Determining what materials to use and how to keep everyone engaged are also challenges that occur during the teaching process.</p>
<p>➤ <b>Assessing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Capture evidence according to the plan and report learning.</li> <li>○ Observe and document evidence of performance of the standard by using the benchmarks</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to the tools you created during the planning stage, teachers may want to observe informally. Keep a record of what you observe and turn what you already do into evidence of student performance. This doesn’t have to be elaborate, jot down observations on sticky notes and add to your folders. The goal would also be for students to begin to track their own progress and learning.</p>
<p>➤ <b>Reflecting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evaluate and reflect on how what was learned is transferable to real-life situation.</li> <li>○ Determine with the learner(s) next steps to help learners meet their goals</li> </ul>	<p>This is not the end of the cycle, but only an on-going spiral where students begin the learning process again with a new goal or continue working on the same goal or standard.</p> <p><b>Reflection</b> Students moving through the cycle have been reflecting on their learning throughout the process. This culminating type of reflection gives them an opportunity to “take stock” of what has been achieved and how they will use this in their lives.</p>

For more information about the teaching and learning cycle, check out the **EFF Teaching/Learning Toolkit** at <http://cls.coe.utk.edu/efftlc> with many more resources are available at the **EFF Special Collection** <http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html>