

LEARNING INTENTIONS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

WHAT ARE THEY?

Learning Intentions are clear statements that describe what learners will know, understand, or be able to do by the end of the lesson. They answer the question: "What are we learning today?"

Success Criteria are the *specific, observable* indicators that show whether a learner has achieved the learning intention. They answer the question: "How will I know I have learned it?"

Success criteria **are used** for **both** informal/formative assessment AND formal assessment. In fact, using the same success criteria across both types of assessment is considered best practice because it creates **alignment and transparency** throughout the learning process.

When the same success criteria guide both daily learning (formative) and final assessment (formal), learners know exactly what they are working toward. There are no surprises. What you practice is what you are assessed on.

Example - Grade 3 Coding:

- **Learning Intention:** I can use a conditional statement (if) to make decisions in my program
- **Success Criteria:**
 - ✓ My solution asks a question
 - ✓ My solution does different things (e.g. follow different paths) based on the answer
 - ✓ My solution works correctly for both "yes" and "no" answers to the question

These SAME criteria are used when:

- The learner reflects on achievement (meta-cognition)
- The teacher guides the learner towards improvement/solution/success /assessment for learning (feedback-driven metacognition)
- The teacher observes during classwork (formative).
- Peers give each other feedback (formative → feedback-driven meta-cognition)
- The learner completes an activity for formal assessment purposes (formal)

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

1. Clarity and Direction for Learners

When young children know *what* they're learning and *how* they will know they've succeeded, they feel more secure and focused. This is especially important in Foundation Phase where learners are still developing their ability to self-regulate and understand abstract learning goals.

Example:

- **Without clarity:** "Today we are going to play with the robots."
- **With clarity:** "Today we are learning to make our robot move forward and stop. We will know we have succeeded when our robot can move to the line and stop before it falls off the table."

Remember: Learning intentions and success criteria aren't bureaucratic requirements - they're powerful tools that make learning visible, achievable, and meaningful for our youngest learners

2. Reduces Cognitive Load

Clear learning intentions help young learners focus their attention on what matters most. When children understand the learning goal, they can direct their mental energy toward achieving it rather than trying to figure out what the teacher wants.

3. Enables Self-Assessment and Metacognition

Success criteria give teacher and learners concrete checkpoints to assess their own progress. Even young children can check: "Have I done this? Can I do that?" This builds metacognitive skills - the ability to think about their own thinking and learning.

Example in Grade 2 Coding:

- **Learning Intention:** "I can use a **repeat** symbol to make my robot move more than one block."
- **Success Criteria:**
 - ✓ My robot moves more than once
 - ✓ I used a **repeat** instruction in my code
 - ✓ My robot makes the same movement (e.g. forward) each time

4. Supports Differentiation

Success criteria can be scaffolded for different ability levels. All learners work toward the same learning intention, but success criteria can have varying levels of complexity.

Example:

- **Limited:** I can make my robot move forward
- **Basic:** I can make my robot **move** forward and turn
- **Good/Confident:** I can make **my** robot follow a path with multiple turns
- **Advanced:** I can make my robot follow a path with avoiding obstacles and adhering to limitations or constraints in the problem statement (e.g. only turning right and moving forward)

5. Makes Assessment Transparent and Fair

When learners know the success criteria from the start, assessment is not a mystery. They know exactly what they're working toward and what will be assessed. This is particularly important for young learners who may feel anxious about "getting it wrong."

6. Improves Teacher Planning and Instruction

Writing clear learning intentions forces us as teachers to think deeply about:

- What is the core **learning** here?
- What does **success** actually look like?
- How will I know if they have learned it?

This clarity improves our teaching and helps us design better learning activities.

Practical Tips for Foundation Phase

Use Child-Friendly Language

Write success criteria in "I can..." statements that young learners can understand and own.

- ✗ "Learners will demonstrate understanding of sequential algorithms "
- ✓ "I can put instructions in the correct order to make my friend reach the treasure"

Keep It Visual

For Foundation Phase learners, one can use pictures alongside words. Display learning intentions and success criteria prominently in the classroom.

Refer Back Throughout the Lesson

Do not just share them at the beginning - revisit them during and after the lesson:

- "Let's check - have we achieved our first success criterion?"
- "Look at our learning intention - are we getting closer?"

Make Them Observable and Achievable

Success criteria should describe what you can see, hear, or observe. Avoid vague terms like "understand" or "appreciate."

✗ "I understand loops"

✓ "I can use a repeat to make my sprite do the same action three times"

The Impact on Learning

Research shows that when learners clearly understand what they're learning and what success looks like, achievement increases significantly. For Foundation Phase learners, this clarity builds confidence, independence, and a love of learning - because they experience the satisfaction of knowing they're succeeding.

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Why This Matters

Consistency and Fairness

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THE CRITICAL CONNECTION

Success criteria create a **clear learning journey**:

- **Beginning of unit:** Teacher shares learning intentions and success criteria
- **During lessons:** Success criteria guide formative assessment and feedback
- **End of unit:** The SAME success criteria form the basis of formal assessment

This alignment means:

- Learners practice exactly what they will be assessed on
- Teaching is focused on the criteria
- Assessment is fair and transparent
- There's continuity between learning and assessment