Learning Goals, Scales, and Learning Activities

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**Introduction**

**Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, the teacher will be able to:

- create clear learning goals aligned to course standards.
- develop a scale for each learning goal that guides progress toward mastery.
- align learning activities with the purpose of the learning goal.
- communicate expectations to learners regarding purposeful learning activities.

The teacher will understand how to:

- distinguish between learning goals and learning activities.
- identify clear learning goals.

The content of this module has been reviewed by the Florida Department of Education and found to be:

1. Consistent with contemporary research on instructional practices that, done correctly and in appropriate circumstance, have a significant probability of a positive impact on student learning.
2. Appropriate content for Florida teachers at all grades and in all subjects.
3. Aligned with Florida’s plan of action for implementing standards-based instruction.
4. Consistent with all district classroom teacher evaluation systems with indicators focused on proficient use of learning goals with scales.
What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals to my students, track student progress on those goals, and celebrate success in meeting or making progress on those learning goals?

Answering these questions is a routine event for Florida's teachers and is a central element in successful implementation of standards-based instruction. Florida educators are tasked with guiding our students toward mastery of the Common Core (CC) and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. That processes involves establishing and communicating learning goals based on the state’s adopted standards and employing instructional strategies that enable student learning growth. Contemporary research on instructional practices reveals that there are strategies with a better chance of getting the results we want when done correctly and in appropriate circumstances. This module is about what teachers need to know to add the strategy of “learning goals with scales” to their library of teaching options.

Charlotte Danielson, in Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching, observed that, “knowledgeable teachers know what concepts are central to a discipline.” Learning goals with scales is one of the instructional planning processes that enable a teacher to focus instruction on that which is most important.

Robert J. Marzano defined elements of effective instruction and how to begin a lesson in Chapter 1 of The Art and Science of Teaching. No curriculum can replace the knowledge and expertise of a teacher, nor can a textbook address all the needs of each student. “Learning goals with scales” is one of the strategies teachers use to make adaptations to meet student learning needs.
Standards for student learning for each course are set at the state level. (These are found at [www.floridastandards.org](http://www.floridastandards.org), also called CPALMS, and should be reviewed often). Districts adopt curriculum materials aligned with the state standards. At the school and classroom level, district-provided curriculum materials and supplemental materials provided by the school and/or teacher are used to focus student learning on the standards of the course. These materials are often organized into “units” of instruction taking many weeks or months to complete. The classroom teacher is the person who guides students through all the curriculum materials in ways that focus student effort on the important issues set forth in the standards. This is standards-based instruction.

Learning goals target key learning at the unit or “big picture” level. Learning goals are not the same thing as daily or even weekly objectives. Goals most often represent a larger focus while objectives represent smaller, more specific learning that leads to the goal or goals. Content details and short term knowledge or skill acquisition planning is typically addressed through daily objectives or weekly lesson plan goals or objectives. A learning goal takes a course standard that will take student weeks, months, or even all year to master and “chunks” it into targets (scales or progress points) that guide students toward successful mastery. The development of learning goals and the scales that identify progress toward mastery learning of those goals are the focus of this online course.

The following graphic (see Figure 1) is provided as a conceptual framework to clarify some of the elements of standards-based instruction introduced throughout this course as well as their relationship to one another. The elements in the diagram below represent tools at an effective teacher’s disposal. It is assumed that teachers will be applying these elements as part of a standards-based instructional process. The three
shaded elements in the diagram are the focus of this course: learning goals, scales, and learning activities. These are three highly effective instructional strategies that connect course standards with student learning growth.

Figure 1

**Standards-based Instruction**

Florida, like most other states, has adopted standards-based instruction as a major component in the state’s plan of action for improving student learning growth. Teacher knowledge of the Common Core and/or Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) assigned to the course(s) taught is prerequisite knowledge for designing learning goals. Each standard clearly indicates what a student will need to know, understand, or be able to do (“what”), but leaves the instructional methodology decisions and selection of teaching strategies (“the how”) to the judgment of the classroom teacher. Teachers are expected to use appropriate research-based
instructional strategies, making adaptations as appropriate based on the students’ learning needs.

In standards-based instruction, there is a gradual progression of skills where one grade forms the foundation for subsequent grades. For most courses, each grade levels priority work leads toward student mastery of the Common Core anchor standards. Additionally, the flexibility afforded by a standards-based curriculum allows teachers to remediate, enrich, or extend instruction of a skill using a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). No worksheet, computer program, or textbook can replace deliberate planning and purposeful teaching. For more information about standards-based instruction and curriculum resources visit: CPALMS, the Florida Department of Education’s one-stop standards reference library and The Common Core State Standards websites. Familiarize yourself with not only the standards for your grade and content area but also with those from both the prior and following grades and the Common Core anchor standards that are the priority end results for K-12 education in Florida. To aid your understanding of the purposes for developing clear learning goals, all of the examples used in this module will be for standards-based learning.

Return Home
Clear Learning Goals

**Pre-Assessment**

Rate yourself on what you already know about learning goals. Use the scale below to guide your reflection:

**Scale 1: Clear Learning Goals**

1: I have a basic understanding of learning goals; I can identify, develop, or communicate a learning goal if I have resources.
2: I have a limited understanding of learning goals; I can identify, develop, or communicate a learning goal if I have resources and assistance.
3: I can identify, develop, and communicate clear learning goals; I know the difference between a learning goal and a learning activity;
4: I can identify, develop, and communicate clear learning goals; I know the difference between a learning goal and a learning activity; and, I can also extend what I know about learning goals to develop an associated scale.

**What they are**

Clear learning goals are statements that communicate to teachers and students exactly what the student will understand and be able to do at the conclusion of instruction. Each goal is tied explicitly to a measureable behavior or set of behaviors that are supported by an accompanying scale. Learning goals encompass two broad categories of knowledge: declarative and procedural. Declarative knowledge is student recall of information about facts, generalizations, or principles, while procedural knowledge involves skills, strategies, or processes.
As a rule of thumb, declarative learning goals begin with:
The student will understand . . .

Procedural learning goals begin with:
The student will be able to . . .

Complex tasks may involve both declarative and procedural knowledge. Learning goals of this nature are written as:
The student will understand “x” and be able to “y.”

Why they are important

A learning goal, when communicated clearly in language the student will be able to understand, provides the learner with the roadmap and specific skills that are needed for mastery. A learning goal also provides teachers with a basis for determining that each learning activity has a purpose aligned with the learning goal(s) – and the course standards. Standards-based instruction lends itself well to developing clear learning goals. Remember that a standard is the end point of instruction and that effective teachers develop learning goals to enable students to reach mastery. Also, though a textbook may provide appropriate activities for a certain group of skills, the teacher needs to distinguish which activities support each standard to ensure that the learning activities on which students expend their time are aligned with the course standards. Keep in mind that a learning activity may support learning on more than one learning goal or standard.

Research by Robert Marzano, John Hattie, and others reveals that goal-setting and monitoring of progress on goals have the potential to increase performance. Research studies often focus on whether there is a cause and effect relationship between an instructional strategy and student learning. An effect size is a statistical measure used to determine the change in student performance that a strategy is likely to have when employed correctly. In Marzano’s meta-analyses, the expected percentile growth was from 16 to 41. What this means is that a student who receives instruction with
clear learning goals will likely score 16 to 41 more points on an assessment than a student who does not have a learning goal. Note that learning goals and goal-setting have the potential to promote positive student growth. When combined with other practices, e.g., providing feedback, tracking student progress, communicating high expectations, among others, the probability for success is greatly increased.

Learning goals are not confined to the pages of the lesson plan. For learning goals to have a positive impact on student performance, the teacher must refer to them throughout the lesson. Moreover, each learning goal must include a rubric or scale for learners to monitor their progress and celebrate their growth.

It is also important to understand that learning goals should focus on the important aspects of a state standard and focus on learning that takes 3 to 9 weeks to master. Learning goals are not the same thing as daily objectives, which may focus on very narrow issues or fact acquisition and do not take long to master. Learning goals, to be effective, need to focus on the important knowledge and skills needed to master state standards. Not everything that will be taught is addressed through learning goals.

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1 From *The Art and Science of Teaching*
However, the priority learning needed to master state standards are the appropriate focus for learning goals and tracking student progress.

**How to develop a clear learning goal**

Learning goals can be developed in a variety of formats. This online course uses, as illustrative examples, learning goals derived from the learning goals template in the Florida Learning Goals Repository on the CPALMS website. Here is an example of such a learning goal from a 1st grade math standard:

**Course/Grade:** Mathematics/Grade 1  
**Standard(s):** MACC.1.OA.1

**Learning Goal:** The student will understand and/or be able to solve addition and subtraction problems within 20 that involve comparing using models, explanations, and equations.

**Essential Question(s):** What are the different ways you can solve addition and subtraction problems that involve comparing?

Take a moment to view the simple scale for the learning goal. Your learning goal end product will follow a similar format. Begin to think about a particular standard and how you will approach each step throughout this module.
### Simple Scale for MACC.1OA.1

| Score 4.0 | In addition to Score 3.0, in-depth inferences and applications that go beyond what was taught.  
- Solve addition and subtraction problems within 20 that involve comparing using models, explanations, and equations.  
- Create and solve addition and subtraction problems involving comparison. | Sample Progress Monitoring and Assessment Activities |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Score 3.0 | The student will understand and/or be able to:  
- Solve addition and subtraction problems within 20 that involve comparing using models, explanations, and equations.  
The student exhibits no major errors or omissions. | |
| Score 2.0 | There are no major errors or omissions regarding the simpler details and processes as the student:  
- Solves addition and subtraction problems within 20 that involve comparing using only two of the three strategies included in the Score 3.0 target.  
However, the student exhibits major errors or omissions regarding the more complex ideas and processes. | |
| Score 1.0 | With help, a partial understanding of some of the simpler details and processes and some of the more complex ideas and processes.  
- The student can just model the solution to an addition or subtraction problem within 20 using comparison | |
| Score 0.0 | Even with help, no understanding or skill demonstrated. | |
Having developed scales (progress points) for this standard, the teacher would next determine progress points (right side column) by developing assessment/feedback methods to track student progress. Next the teacher would use the scales and progress tracking decisions to design learning activities that align with the scales and progress tracking, assemble instructional materials/resources that will support student learning on the learning goal, and initiate a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to support student learning growth.

*Focused Lesson Objective(s) to Support Mastery of the Learning Goal(s):*

Having developed learning goals that cover unit level outcomes, teachers may need to develop daily or weekly objectives to guide day to day work. The chart below suggests some issues to address:

**Learning Activities Sample Planning Template**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Learning Required</th>
<th>Activities, Assignments, and Enabling Dialogue (with self and others)</th>
<th>Activities/Assignments Generating Experience (by doing and/or observing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with new knowledge/skills (introduction)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice to deepen new knowledge/skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application (if appropriate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning should also address these factors:

- Reflect on and describe in your planning how increasingly complex text will be utilized to support literacy goals:

- Reflect on and describe in your planning steps that will be taken to ensure students make relevant connections while pursuing the lesson objective:

  Learning goals can be developed at every grade level and for every subject. There are many ways to design learning goals. This course uses one particular template (a simple 5 point scale) to illustrate the process. However, classroom teachers will adapt their format for learning goals to fit student needs.

  To understand how to develop a learning goal, this course uses examples from the Common Core Standards. Look at these two standards:

  - From the English Language Arts Standards – Science and Technical Subjects – Grade 9-10: **RST.9-10.7.** “Translate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text into visual form (e.g., a table or chart) and translate information expressed visually or mathematically (e.g., in an equation) into words”
  - From the English Language Arts Standards – Reading: Literature – Grade 1: **RL.1.3.** Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

**Tip:** Identify what students need to know and be able to do (content and process) and how they need to demonstrate their learning.

  The senior high standard clearly requires the student to be able to implement a procedure or process – translating information from one form to another. The first grade standard requires the student to be able to use a process (describing) to meet the standard. While both the senior high and elementary standards may involve students
putting things “into their own words,” the students’ ability to use the underlying process is the essential element in each standard. In addition, both standards involve information the student must recall, understand, and describe before the information can be translated into a visual or word format (e.g., what are “characters,” who are the characters in this story, or what is the horizontal axis on a chart for?). Unpacking the standards to determine what students need to know and be able to do is the first step in crafting learning goals and aligning learning activities to those goals.

The issue here is not the grade level of a standard but the type of learning or level of rigor required. Understanding and recall of facts, generalizations, or principles (often called “declarative knowledge”) and being able to use skills, strategies, or processes (“procedural knowledge”) will be found in standards at all grade levels. Common Core literacy competencies and mastering access to complex text is infused across the curriculum. Teachers need to “unpack” the standards to first identify the content, the processes and performance required to master the standard so appropriate goals and activities can be crafted. The unpacking process helps focus on how the issues in each standard support development of thinking skills needed in a global economy and readiness for college and careers.

Look at this Common Core Standard for Reading: Literature (RL). The state Common Core Standard for grade 1 is: RL.1.3. “Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.” The steps for developing a clear learning goal aligned to this standard are to: 1) define what the student needs to understand or be able to do; 2) define how the student needs to demonstrate this knowledge and skill; and 3) at what level of complexity. In this example, the student will need to be able to engage in a process, e.g., describe using details. The student may demonstrate description of details
in many different ways, which is why it is essential to have the end goal in mind. Based upon this standard, the student will need to use his/her knowledge of how to identify and extract key details from a story in order to describe narrative story elements (characters, setting, and/or major events). This means that there will be a number of learning activities that the teacher will select to help students reach the standard. The learning goal and the accompanying scales focus on what the student will understand or be able to do. The learning activities focus on enabling them to do so.

**What does mastery mean?**

You will next need to determine criteria for mastery. Remember that the learning goal must be two things: comprehensible to the student and measurable either by scale or rubric both for you (to monitor) and the student (to monitor his/her understanding and progress towards mastery). The students must be able to understand what they are expected to understand or be able to do, so the language used to express learning goals and scales is important. Standards are written for professional educators. Learning goals may need to be “translated” into terms students understand. “Measurable” is important because tracking progress (by teacher and student) is an essential aspect of quality instruction. Both teacher and student must be able to recognize when students move from one level of the scale to another.

For the bulk of this course you will examine the issue of learning goals with scales using an example based on a grade 1 Common Core reading standard. The concepts about developing learning goals with scales and aligning learning activities to your learning goals are applicable across the disciplines and grades. No matter what grade(s) or subject(s) you teach, the instructional strategy of learning goals with scales applies to you. As you apply the concepts presented in this course to your own subject and grade,
you will be able to develop learning goals that support your students. The Appendix for this course provides sample learning goals with scales from several different subjects and grade levels for your review.

For these sample standards, in this grade 1 example, we want the student to be able to describe the characters, settings, and major events in a story. This is not a demanding task in a class with normal levels of prior knowledge and reading readiness so the target of the learning goal can be very similar to the standard itself. However, if the students need growth both in understanding the elements of the story (e.g. setting, character) and the process of describing, separate goals may be needed. In the more complex senior high standard, it may be helpful to “chunk” the standard into separate learning goals, e.g., one on expressing text in visual form and another on translating numbers/charts/graphs into words.

To focus on the grade 1 standard, we want the student to be able to describe the characters, settings, and major events in a story. We may also need the student to discriminate between major and minor events, while adding key details. You will draft your clear learning goal in a form that your students can relate to. For example, if students already understand setting, characters, and events as literary concepts your goal might be:

I will be able to describe the characters, settings, and major events in a story.

If students are not clear on what “describe” requires them to do, your goal might be:

I will understand how to describe the characters, settings, and major events in a story.
Review the 2nd draft learning goal above to be clear on how it aligns with the standard on which it is based. How is this learning goal different from the standard? How is it the same? In the example here, the standard says describe. To meet the standard the student must be able to describe; the learning goal focuses on how to describe. Both standard and learning goal focus the task (describing) on characters, settings, and major events.

The next steps are to create a set of **scales** that identify stages or progress points that move a student toward mastery of the goal and a set of formative learning activities that support the learning goal. Formative activities are those that engage students in learning to do what is expected.

**Examples and Concept Map**

Think about an activity or skill. How do you know that you are “good” at it? Even if someone is able to play an instrument, do all musicians posses the same level of proficiency? Someone may be able to read music fluently but play an instrument poorly. A clear distinction is necessary for refining a learning goal. The category of knowledge required to meet a goal shapes the construction (wording) of the learning goal. When teachers are able to classify the knowledge they want students to acquire as being either *procedural* or *declarative*, the type of activities needed is clarified and a basis for building scales emerges.
Caution

Learning goals are the endpoint; they are not activities, assignments, or assessments.

Self-Assessment

Rate Yourself! At the beginning of this chapter you were asked to rate yourself on what you already knew. Has your work on this chapter changed your understanding? Use this link to return to the self-rating scale and see where you think you are now.
Pre-Assessment

Rate yourself on what you already know about scales. Use the scale below to guide your reflection.

Learning Goal: The teacher can create, use, and modify scales to support a learning goal, and monitor student progress.

Scale 2: Developing and Using Scales

4: I can create, use, and modify scales to support a learning goal and monitor student progress. I can also differentiate my scales for unique learners and situations.

3: I can create, use, and modify scales to support a learning goal and monitor student progress.

2: I have a basic understanding of how to create, use, or modify scales to support a learning goal as long as I have resources that identify priority issues and appropriate sequences.

1: I can use a learning goal scale created by others, but have a limited understanding of creating my own scales: I can use, or modify scales to support a learning goal as long as I have resources and assistance that identify priority issues and appropriate sequences.

0: Even with help, I do not understand scales.
What they are

Scales provide a clear learning progression of what a student should understand or be able to do. The terms scale or rubric relate to the same concept: an explicit set of criteria used for assessing progress toward a learning goal. For purposes of clarity in classroom teacher evaluation, the term scale will be used throughout these modules. A scale typically has several criteria, each focused on some important aspect of mastering the goal. The progress points built into the scale are appropriately sequenced, usually based on a logical order or progression of learning or ascending levels of difficulty. The points in the scale must directly support the learning goal. Learning activities are needed that are directly tied to the learning goal(s) and the state standard(s) on which the learning goal is based.

The number of progress points included in the scales varies with the complexity of the learning goal and the prior knowledge of the students. In this course, you are presented with a model that uses a 5 point scale. The scale in this course is based on a 0 to 4 point system (based on whole numbers). Where the complexity of a goal or the stages of progression require it, some teachers add increments of 0.5. (e.g., 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5…4.0). In simple goals, teachers may use less than 5 scale points and in very complex ones, more than 5. However, in cases where many scale points seem necessary, dividing the expectations into more than one learning goal, each with a separate scale may be helpful. Whatever choice is made on the number of points in a scale, included in each scale are the simple and complex parts of each declarative or procedural learning goal.

Scales are formative in nature in that they help guide students towards mastery. Contemporary research on effective instructional strategies has revealed that, without
question, the frequency with which formative assessments are given is directly related to gains in student achievement. The scales in a learning goal provide a basis for more frequent formative feedback.

In Charlotte Danielson’s book, *Enhancing Professional Practice; A Framework for Teaching*, appropriate sequencing of learning is a characteristic of the proficient and distinguished level of teacher performance. Scales in a learning goal are an effective sequencing tool. In Marzano’s *The Art and Science of Teaching*, the use of clear learning goals is identified as a high-effect size instructional strategy. In the Florida state model for teacher evaluation, chunking content into “digestible bites” is an essential element in lessons addressing content. Scales are a way to chunk the content into proportions that students can handle.

**Why they are important**

A letter grade or percent correct can only provide a limited amount of information to the student, teacher, or parent about what students are learning. For instance, what can a student who received a “B” on an assignment do that a student who got a “C” cannot? While grades as a reporting process have been traditionally used in America’s schools, letter grades do not provide clarity on what was learned – and what still needs to be learned.

In Dr. Douglas Reeves’s research on effective schools he reported that schools with quality results on student learning growth focus on 3 to 9 primary strategies for improvement. Dr. Marzano’s research reveals that the use of learning goals with scales and tracking student progress are among the most effective of these instructional strategies.
Timely, specific, and actionable feedback is an essential element in teaching and learning. A scale provides a clear outline of behaviors that make it possible to identify a student’s current level of proficiency, monitor progress, and provide timely, actionable, and specific feedback.

In the model for scales used in this course, **level 3 in the 0-4 point scale is the level of proficiency sought.** It represents mastery of the goal. Level 4 describes a higher level of implementation than required to meet the goal. Students who achieve a level “3” should be able to communicate *why* they are at the level and *how* they will reach the next point on the scale. When used appropriately, scales in conjunction with formative assessments have the potential to greatly improve student performance on summative measures.

**How to develop a scale**

Identify the level of mastery that includes the simple and complex behaviors necessary to meet a given standard. Refer to the previous example (RL.1.3). Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details. (Note: to review Common Core standards go to [http://www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org))

**For students to achieve proficiency, what will they need to understand and be able to do?**

You may need to “unpack” a standard to develop a learning goal and scales that establish progress points. At this stage the teacher uses knowledge of the subject matter and understanding of the students’ prior knowledge. For example, RL.1.3 involves the elements of events, settings, and characters, as well as an understanding of what it means to “describe.” The teacher must decide whether to structure scales so that students address all of the key elements (setting, events, characters) at each scale level.
building depth as they move up the scale, or focus each scale on a portion of the elements, e.g., building depth on character) then moving on to the next scale or progress point adding new elements, e.g., setting as they move up the scale. Whatever form of scales are used, they will be helpful when creating learning activities. Before we return to scales, here is an illustrative example of unpacking a standard:

Figure 1.3

Unpacking reveals vocabulary students will need to know, process skills (e.g., describing using key details) and distinguishing between important and unimportant.

Having unpacked a standard, by whatever individual or collegial process works best in your situation, you will be better prepared to craft learning goals and scales. Here is an example of how using the insights from unpacking a standard can be used to craft a learning goal with scales.
Unpacking standards is a process of determining what students need to know or be able to do to meet or exceed the standards. This process helps in “chunking” learning into manageable bites. It also helps in deciding what issues to “chunk” into learning goals. This process helps a teacher identify levels of rigor and performance that students will be expected to demonstrate. The unpacking example above breaks content/skills down to ever more specific levels. Decisions on what level you formulate a learning goal are impacted by the prior knowledge of your students and the learning environment in which they work. Generally, you seek a learning goal that addresses all the key issues of the goal as it scales up depth and difficulty. Lesson study teams, grade level teams, and
subject area departments may work on “unpacking” as a collegial learning activity. This process usually deepens everyone’s understanding of the standards.

This following example of a learning goal (see Figure 1.5) illustrates how unpacking a standard leads to development of learning goals. This sample is a “simple” scale with five progress points. As noted earlier, scales may be as complex as meets the needs of the students and subject matter. The scale used may vary from goal to goal based on the structure of the subject and the prior learning of the students. Keep in mind that there are a variety of ways to structure a learning goal. In the model used here there is a 5 point scale from 0 to 4. Zero means “I don’t know yet” or “I can’t yet,” Levels 1 thru 4 are rising levels of capacity. In this model the 3rd level is the actual learning goal. The 4th (highest) level on the scale describes what students may do when they exceed the learning goal. Scale levels 1 and 2 describe progress points on the way to meeting the learning goal. For example:

Figure 1.5

**Simplified Scale for Complex Parts**

The student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.0 - In addition to the 3.0 level, I can describe how the setting and events affect the major character(s).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.0 - I can describe all of the major characters, details of the setting, and all of the major events in a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 - I can identify setting, several major or minor events, and major characters in a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 - I can identify setting and some events in a story, with some help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0 - Even with help, I cannot identify events, characters and setting in a story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A sample of a more complex scale might look like this:

Figure 1.6

Complete Scale for Major Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0 - I can describe all of the major events and the setting in a story in a way that shows how they affect a character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 – I can describe all of the major events and the setting in a story and partially understands how they affect a character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 - I can describe all of the major characters, setting and events in a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 - In addition to 2.0, I can describe several major or minor events in a story and partially understand why an event is considered major or minor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 - I can describe the setting, some of the major or minor events in a story, and some of the major characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 - I can identify the main characters, the setting in a story, the major events in a story and describe them some with help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 - I can identify the major characters in a story and, with some help, the events that are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5 - I can, with help, identify some events, some characters, or the setting in a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0 - I cannot, even with help, identify events, characters, or the setting in a story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice how the scales moves from *explicit* elements of a story, e.g., a specific event or character, to *implicit* elements or the major events, characters, and setting of a story. We can clearly see where a student is in understanding of this standard based on the scale. Each student can also track his/her progress toward mastery with this scale.

**Caution**

A scale is for the student as much as it is for the teacher. If your scales are confusing or include extraneous material they will not be of use to your students. Make sure that your scales are “user-friendly” and clearly define what a student must do to achieve mastery.
Figure 1.7: Generic Scales

**Simplified Scale**

4.0 A level of performance beyond the 3.0 target level.

3.0 The actual learning goal target

2.0 A progress point on the way to the 3.0 level.

1.0 A simpler or preliminary progress point on the way to 3.0

0.0 I can’t do this yet.

A sample complex scale would look like this:

**Complex Scale**

4.0 A level of performance beyond the 3.0 target level - typically describing deeper level of mastery, broader application, or work that would be expected at a higher grade level

3.5 A level of performance beyond the 3.0 target level but not yet 4.0

3.0 The actual learning goal target

2.5 A progress point on the way to the 3.0 level, beyond 2.0 but not yet 3.0.

2.0 A progress point on the way to the 3.0 level

1.5 A simpler or preliminary progress point on the way to 3.0 but not yet 2.0.

1.0 A simpler or preliminary progress point on the way to 3.0

0.5 I can’t do this yet but am beginning to get a part of it

0.0 I can’t do this yet.
Self-Assessment

Rate Yourself! At the beginning of this chapter you were asked to rate yourself on what you already knew. Has your work on this chapter changed your understanding? Use this link to return to the self-rating scale and see where you think you are now.

Return Home
Purposeful Learning Activities

Pre-Assessment

Rate yourself on what you already know about learning activities. Use the scale below to guide your reflection.

Scale 3: Purposeful Learning Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4: I can identify, create, develop, and track learning activities that support the learning goal. I can also adapt the learning activities to address unique learner needs and situations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3: I can identify, create, develop, and track learning activities that support the learning goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: I have a basic understanding of how to identify, create, develop, or track learning activities that support the learning goal as long as I have resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1: I have a limited understanding of learning activities; I can identify, create, develop, and track learning activities that support the learning goal as long as I have resources and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0: Even with help, I do not understand what learning activities are.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What they are

Learning activities are purposeful exercises that engage the student with explicit content to promote mastery of the learning goal. Simply stated, learning activities are the tasks you have students do during school time. Learning activities are not the same as learning goals. While a learning goal is where the student needs to be at the end of a lesson or unit, much like a destination, learning activities are the vehicles and paths the student uses to get there.
A significant portion of the research on effective teaching practices distinguishes between activities and assignments. Both learning activities and assignments are things that students do. Activities refers to events students engage in while at school and during “school time,” generally in the classroom, and with the class and school resources available as appropriate. Assignments refer to events that students engage in at home or outside the classrooms, usually during non-class time and using non-school resources as appropriate. Both activities and assignments should be aligned to course standards and the priority learning goals. In this online course, content is focused on learning activities (work done at school and usually in class under the teacher’s supervision with classroom and school resources available). However, the same principles will apply to most assignments.

Why they are important

Learning activities, when appropriately developed, are formative in nature and help to create a continuous flow of feedback, progress monitoring, and recognition of student success. Effective teachers exercise the flexibility that a clear learning goal provides to develop the purposeful activities that support the goal. Think for a moment about the learning activities you could use to support the learning goal for this standard.

RL.1.3. “The student will understand how to describe the characters, settings, and major events in a story.”

You might have students create story maps, then, at a later time, have students use the story maps to draft a written description of the story elements. Or, perhaps, students could practice orally summarizing a familiar story. All of this would occur while applying a scale by which students can rate themselves.
**How to select learning activities**

Wide ranges of learning activities are available. Some are provided in texts and supplementary curriculum materials. Some are teacher developed. There are many low and no-cost learning activities available. Before choosing to include any of the activities available to you, first consider how they support your learning goal. For example, is the activity you selected going to build the skills necessary for your students to be successful? What is the level of cognitive demand? How can you apply the scale to the assignment? Can my students make the connection between the activity and the learning goal?

Learning activities are deliberately planned and require the student to be engaged at a level of cognitive demand that is consistent with the learning goal. An activity may be fun or engaging but lack the rigor necessary to meet the standard. Teachers need to be cognizant of the difference between tasks that are difficult due to content and those that are difficult due to the demand placed on the thinking skills of an individual student. In short, only select activities that support the learning goal and engage the learner at an appropriately demanding level. Some learning activities may focus on a specific learning goal or stage of progression. Other learning activities may support more than one learning goal or more than one standard.
Figure 1.8 How all the pieces fit together

- Clear Learning Goals
- Formative Assessments
- Celebration of how success occurred
- Praise for rigorous effort
- Goal Setting Processes
- Timely and Actionable Feedback
- Scales
- Tangible Rewards
- Purposeful Learning Activities
Caution

Learning activities are what students do. Align your instruction and activities to support the learning goal with the end product as the focal point of your planning.

Self-Assessment

Rate Yourself! At the beginning of this chapter you were asked to rate yourself on what you already knew. Has your work on this chapter changed your understanding? Use this link to return to the self-rating scale and see where you think you are now.

Return Home
Communicating Expectations and Tracking Progress

What to do

Now that you have your learning goal, learning activities, and scales — you will need to communicate your expectations to your students. Learning goals with scales help teachers focus on priority content and develop effective lessons. However, the process is not complete until students understand and are engaged in working through the scales. Part of this ongoing process is to have students rate their current knowledge of the topic by using a scale. Students will need varying levels of guidance and support during this process. In some situations you may want students developing their individual goals aligned to the state standards being pursued. Keep in mind that student goals need to be measurable and realistic in relation to the learning goal(s). For example, a student may say, “I want to make an A on the test.” They need a more focused goal connected to learning. How can you use your knowledge of learning goals and scales to help this student develop a goal? Ask yourself the following questions:

Is the student goal…

• directly related to the learning goal?

• measurable?

• realistic to the student’s ability level?

• reachable during the current unit of instruction?

All of the answers to the previous questions must be a “yes” in order to move forward to tracking student progress. Translate “reward and recognition” goals into specific declarative or procedural proficiency gains so students learn how to actually accomplish their goals.
Once your students have set their own goals, you will want to facilitate tracking their progress during each step of your instruction. Some students may achieve their goals quickly while others may “get stuck” at a certain level. A chart (see Figure 1.9) is a good way to provide a visible reminder to students about where they started and where they want to be at the end of the unit. Here are a few examples:
**Primary Grades**

**My personal learning goal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>My Score</th>
<th>Did I do my best today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Upper Elementary**

**My personal learning goal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>My Score</th>
<th>What am I having trouble doing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Secondary Level**

**My personal learning goal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Level</th>
<th>Status Check</th>
<th>What am I having trouble doing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not yet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Throughout each lesson, have students rate their current understanding of the learning goal based on the scale. Have students verbalize why they believe they have reached a certain point and what they will need to do to move to the next point on the scale. Encourage students to be honest and foster a judgment-free classroom where students support each other to achieve their goals. Develop processes that work for your classes on student’s tracking their progress on learning goals. Tracking progress done by the teacher helps understand what needs to be done next in terms of adjusting instruction. Tracking progress by students fosters deeper student engagement and acceptance of responsibility for their own learning. Consider charting student progress in a central location and recognizing positive student growth. Celebrations of success as progress is made should focus on how the progress was made (e.g. recognize rigor and perseverance) as much as the fact that progress occurred.
Module Activities

Your turn!

1. Unpack a standard.
   a. Select a standard from either CPALMS, or The Common Core State Standards websites.
   b. Analyze what students need to know and/or be able to do to master this standard.
   c. Assess what level of rigor is required and what performance would be expected.
   d. Discuss your “unpacking” with a colleague and see where you agree/disagree about what the standard asks of the students.

2. Create a clear learning goal. You may use the template provided here.
   a. Determine if the standard is declarative, procedural, or both.
   b. Select a significant “chunk” on which to formulate a learning goal.
   c. Write a clear learning goal with the appropriate stem.

3. Create a scale.
   a. Determine the criteria for mastery of the standard.
   b. Write an essential question (if appropriate to your subject and instructional process).
   c. Review your “unpacking” of the standard to clarify the learning required.
   d. Separate the smaller skills into complex and simple.
   e. Write the mastery criteria as a 3.0 on your scale.
   f. Select appropriate learning activities to support the learning goal.
g. Review the language used in your goal and scales…will your students understand it? How will you enable them to grasp what is expected?

h. Submit your learning goal, scale, and activities to the Learning Goals Repository on [CPALMS](https://cpalms.org).

4. Plan how you will communicate your learning goals to students, families, and other stakeholders.

5. Determine your method for tracking and celebrating progress.
## Figure 2.0: Learning Goals Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of knowledge: declarative, procedural, or both.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear learning goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential question (if relevant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for mastery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex skills or processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple skills or processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery criteria (level 3.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful learning activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative assessments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review of Course Objectives

Are you able to:

• create clear learning goals?
• develop a scale for each learning goal?
• communicate expectations to learners?

Do you understand how to:

• distinguish between learning goals and learning activities?
• identify clear learning goals?

Want to Know More?

The Learning Goals Repository is an online collection of learning goals with scales developed by Florida educators. Each example in the collection is aligned to a Florida New Generation Sunshine State Standard (NGSSS) or a Common Core State Standard. You may access the collection or submit your own work for sharing with others at: http://www.floridastandards.org (CPALMS).

Additional information on learning goals may be found at these websites:

  http://www.startwithsuccess.org
  http://www.floridaschoolleaders.org

Questions on the role of learning goals in instructional and school leader evaluation systems may be submitted to the Florida Department of Education: Division of Educator Quality

Questions on aligning learning goals to state standards may be addressed to the Florida Department of Education: Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction.
Final Word

Learning Goals with scales are a high effect size instructional strategy. Combined with tracking student progress and celebrating success, there is a powerful potential for improving student learning. Not every aspect of the standards assigned to a course need to be addressed with formal learning goals. It is a teacher’s task to unpack standards, consider the students needs and prior knowledge, and craft a set of priority learning goals that move students forward.

Teachers should, to the degree possible, work together to craft learning goals and review each other’s work. Lesson study teams and PLC’s are excellent formats for working on learning goals. Department, team, and grade level meetings should review work in progress on learning goals regularly. Given the focus in the Common Core standards on text complexity and literacy, cross-curriculum teams should coordinate their work on learning goals.

Most teacher evaluation systems in Florida include indicators that allow feedback on the use and quality of learning goals. Teachers are encouraged to seek feedback from site administrators, instructional coaches, and district curriculum experts.

Professional mastery of your subject matter and use of high quality instructional processes are supported by your work on learning goals with scales. Rigorous effort and continuous progress on your part will support your professional growth and your students’ success.
Appendix

A Learning Goals repository on www.cpalms.org provides Florida educators with an online location to share learning goals aligned to Florida academic standards. Directions for use of the repository are found at the CPALMS website.