

Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to
Accelerate Student
Learning

Companion Guide

Chapter 4: Behavioral Engagement
Intentional Step Two



Chapter 4

Intentional Step Two: Improve the Clarity of Learning Intentions

John Hattie's research (2017a) indicates that teacher clarity (.75) strongly influences student learning outcomes. This powerful intervention tool emphasizes the importance of clearly communicating the purpose of lessons (learning intentions) and the criteria by which teachers will measure student success (success criteria). Teachers should outline the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values students need to learn and how they will approach that learning. Before teachers implement a lesson or task, they should think about the goals of that lesson, how students will progress, and the next steps they'll take following completion. For a deeper discussion of learning intentions and success criteria, see Chapter 8.

Strategy 1: I Do - We Do - You Do

This strategy is applicable when the teacher wishes to clarify expectations and model how to complete portions of the work. First, the teacher demonstrates how to perform the task (“I Do”). Then, the class works together on a slightly different example of the task (“We Do”). Finally, the teacher asks students to work on the task independently (“You Do”). Students should refrain from repeating exactly what the teacher did; rather, the activity should provide them with enough information to perform the assignment independently. Be mindful of differentiating the examples at each step. If teachers see that students are still struggling, they can add an additional scaffolded step to the You Do portion of the exercise where students perform the task with a partner and then try it on their own.

I Do - We Do - You Do helps establish clear guidelines for student learning and gradually shifts the cognitive responsibility from the teacher to the student. The teacher scaffolds the task

by walking students through several examples before asking them to work independently. As a result, students gain confidence in their abilities and learn to seek answers on their own. They can also engage in deliberate practice (.79) and improve specific skills, such as critical thinking, ideation, motivation, and making reasoned judgements.

Strategy 2: Rubrics

Rubrics are an excellent device for clarifying learning expectations. Many online tools can help create customized rubrics to suit the specific needs of a particular class and students. Some general rubric making tools include RubricMaker, RubiStar, iRubric, and EssayTagger.

Rubrics allow teachers to evaluate student performance using well-defined criteria. They help teachers focus their feedback on the work and provide a framework for offering guidance on how students might improve. Students then have a clearer idea of what they need to do to succeed. Outlining expectations also encourages students to seek mastery (.57) rather than simply completing a task; they will seek to improve their skills and see the value and purpose of what they're doing, gaining agency and motivation so they can begin to assess their learning and set their own goals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).