Design Question 1: What Will I Do to Establish and Communicate Learning Goals, Track Student Progress and Celebrate Success?

We set a relevant goal, we designate a time frame, we learn strategies, and we practice. We recruit resources for support; we gauge progress, and adjust accordingly. We celebrate small accomplishments until we reach our target. Learning goals are the staple of effective teaching. How do you develop, foster, and celebrate learning goals in your classroom?

In *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007), Dr. Marzano reports an effect size of .55 when a learning goal is used, a percentile gain of 21%. In addition, his findings show goal setting and feedback when used together are more effective than either one by itself.

Establishing and communicating learning goals to students is the starting place for effective teaching. Ensuring that students clearly understand the learning goal and can articulate their progress toward the goal is the main focus of Design Question 1. Equally important is celebrating incremental progress toward the learning goal as well as students’ final status.

This first design question contains some of the most important elements in the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. Design Question 1 is part of the Lesson Segment Involving Routine Events within Domain 1, which addresses classroom strategies and behaviors. The three elements within Design Question 1 are separate, but clearly linked.

Element 1: Providing Rigorous Learning Goals and Performance Scales (Rubrics)

The most basic issue for a teacher is deciding what students should understand or be able to do as a result of their instruction. Rigorous state standards or Common Core State Standards (CCSS) guide teacher instruction and student learning and are used to create learning goals. An effective learning goal is composed of clearly stated learning targets that demonstrate attainment and mastery performance of the academic standards. Before developing learning goals, teachers must first deconstruct the standard and identify its big ideas.

Deconstruction means to break the standard into its essential concepts and skills. Once this is done, teachers can determine what the big ideas are then write learning targets that will lead to students learning each big idea.
There are three types of learning targets. The learning goal targets are statements of knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate mastery of a standard. Learning goal targets are not daily objectives and often require a series of lessons to accomplish. Don’t confuse learning targets with learning activities or assignments. Learning activities and assignments are designed to allow students to demonstrate their learning and progress in meeting the learning target.

The learning goal target is at the same level of complexity as the standard. Once the learning goal target is determined, foundational targets should be considered. Foundational targets consist of knowledge and basic processes that build to the cognitive level of the academic standard. They are the prerequisites that students need to master to ultimately achieve the learning goal targets. The third type of learning target, cognitively complex targets, extends and deepens the knowledge and skills of the standard and moves students beyond the cognitive complexity of the standard.

Once the learning targets have been deconstructed from the standard and extended, a performance scale is constructed. Performance scales create a progression of learning that teachers can utilize to provide feedback on learning. Scales help teachers design activities, assignments, and formative assessments that help students achieve the learning targets. It is important to note that scales are developed for a standard or group of standards and are therefore not the daily objective. Scales do not need created on a daily basis.

The performance scale or rubric should contain learning goal targets at 3.0, cognitively complex targets at 4.0, foundational targets at 2.0, and partial success at 1.0. The following is an example of learning targets that were deconstructed and extended using the Common Core Standard in English Language Arts RI.6.6. The CCSS standard reads: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text. This can be translated into the learning goal target, foundational target and cognitively complex target seen below.

| 4.0 | The student will be able to compare authors’ points of view in several texts on similar topics and distinguishes the impact of the texts on the reader, related to the point of view provided. |
| 3.0 | The student will be able to determine the author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explains how it is conveyed in the text. |
| 2.0 | The student will be able to recognize the author’s point of view or purpose given selected passages. |
| 1.0 | With help, the student has partial success at score 2.0 content and score 3.0 content |

Both the learning targets and scale should be shared with students. Teachers can help students personalize the learning targets to gain a clearer understanding of the scale. As the lessons progress, students will be able to articulate what the learning target is, and where they are on the scale. Teachers should refer back to the learning target and scale throughout the lesson, so students see the connection. Formative assessments enable the teacher and students to see how learning is progressing.
Element 2: Tracking Student Progress
Students can use the results of the formative assessments to chart their progress and determine where they are on the scale. In essence, the scale and the formative assessments team together to provide students feedback on their learning. By tracking student progress, teachers can see how effective their instruction is and what adjustments they need to make to ensure students reach the target or higher. When students track their own progress they are able to self-regulate, thus, developing an intrinsic motivation for learning.

Element 3: Celebrating Success
Students and teachers should celebrate whenever students move up the scale. Celebrating success should focus on knowledge gain rather than effort. Teachers can make the celebration more meaningful by considering the different personalities of their students and how each might like to be celebrated.

All three elements should be in place and working interdependently. A learning target is not effective without a scale or learning progression, and the scale will lose effectiveness if knowledge gains aren't celebrated. Without the learning targets, there is no scale and therefore, there is nothing to celebrate!

Teachers can make a big difference in the classroom with practice and persistence in using learning goals and performance scales, tracking student progress, and celebrating success.

Below are some suggestions for making these elements common practice in your classroom:

- Review your current learning targets. Evaluate whether the targets are actually learning targets, or if they are activities and assignments used to reach a learning target. Revise as needed.

- Keep a log for one class or use a classroom seating chart to track how often you and your students celebrate success. Be sure to note not only the frequency, but also other specifics such as, who initiated the celebration, others involved, type of celebration, purpose for the celebration, and when the celebration occurred.
