

Examples of learning intentions

The learning intention is expressed in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills, and links directly with the relevant curriculum document.

The design of learning intentions starts with the answers to these questions.

- What do I want students to know?
- What do I want students to understand?
- What do I want students to be able to do?

A certain challenge exists for teachers in translating the knowledge, understanding and skills of a published curriculum into learning intentions whose language is accessible to their students, but time spent on this preliminary step is in itself excellent professional learning.

Some schools have made this 'unpacking' of the curriculum a focus of teacher meetings. The result, they claim, is that all teachers have a much better understanding of the curriculum itself, and there is an increased confidence in the consistent quality of teaching across classes.

- Learning intentions that focus on knowledge
- Learning intentions that focus on skills
- Learning intentions that focus on understanding

Learning intentions that focus on knowledge

Thinking about the different kinds of knowledge, and being specific about the kind of knowledge that is required in a particular situation, will help teachers design their learning intentions.

They consider, for instance,

- knowledge *about* a particular topic
(*know about different types of energy*)
- knowledge of *how* something is done, of the steps involved in producing something
(*know how to construct a pie graph*)
- knowledge of *why* something happens
(*know why rabbits are an ecological disaster*)
- knowledge of *what* causes something to happen
(*know what causes thunderstorms*)

Learning intentions that focus on skills

Learning intentions that focus on skills always start with the words 'to be able to' followed by a verb. For example,

- *to be able to write a recount*
- *to be able to solve a problem using more than one strategy*
- *to be able to work as part of a team*
- *to be able to identify persuasive strategies used by the author or an argument*
- *to be able to experiment with a variety of media in order to achieve a stated effect*

Often learning intentions that focus on skills will also imply the acquisition of certain knowledge or understandings. For instance, to be able to write a recount, students must have a knowledge of the structures and features of a recount.

Learning intentions that focus on understanding

Understanding builds on knowledge and requires some kind of processing.

For instance, a student might be able to list the causes of an historical event - thereby showing knowledge of them - but understanding requires analysis and, perhaps, interpretation.

Understanding, then, is of a higher cognitive order than knowledge and, in designing learning intentions, teachers ensure that students are exposed to learning which makes those higher demands as well as demands of a lesser nature.

- *understand the causes of an historical event*
- *understand the effects of diet on health*
- *understand how persuasive language can position the reader to agree with the author*
- *understand how the internet can be used for research purposes*
- *understand what happens when our bodies consume carbohydrates*
- *understand why X causes Y.*