

**Targets:** What Do We Want Students to Know and Be Able to Do?

with Cris Tovani [ctovani@hotmail.com](mailto:ctovani@hotmail.com)

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**The Foundation of Student-Engaged Assessment**

The process of learning shouldn't be a mystery. Learning targets provide students with tangible goals that they can understand and work toward. Rather than the teacher taking on all of the responsibility for meeting a lesson's objectives, learning targets, written in student-friendly language and frequently reflected on, transfer ownership for meeting objectives from the teacher to the student. The seemingly simple work of reframing objectives written for teachers to learning targets, written for – and owned by – students, turns assessment on its head. The student becomes the main actor in assessing and improving his or her learning. From **Leaders of Their Own**

**Learning** by Ron Berger, et. al.

**Series Learning Targets**

<b>Learning Targets</b>	<b>Reflection</b>
I can plan so that students are engaged in reading, writing, and discussing for more minutes of the class period or day than I am talking.	
I can demonstrate for students how I make sense of and repair meaning of text that I ask students to read and write.	

We Don't Teach Standards. We Want Students to Hit the Standards!

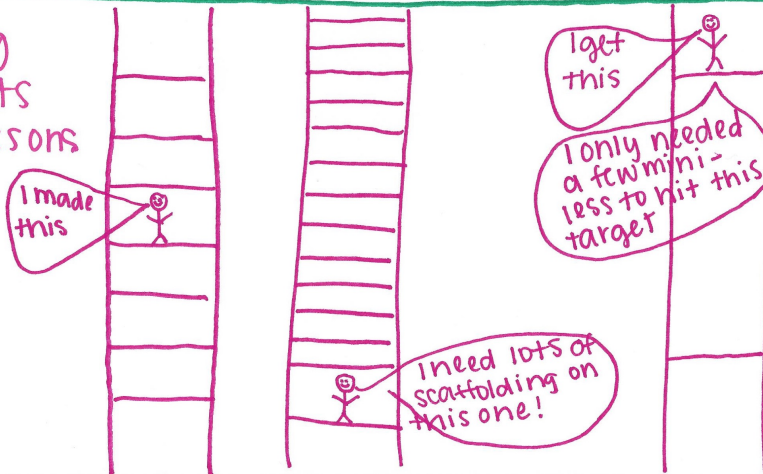
Makes →  
Demonstrations →  
Performances →

How students will show,  
they've hit the standard.

We want kids  
to hit the  
standard:

**STANDARD:** Using the appropriate text, determine the theme(s) of a text, analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

We scaffold learning by identifying targets and planning mini-lessons to show learners "how" to hit those targets.

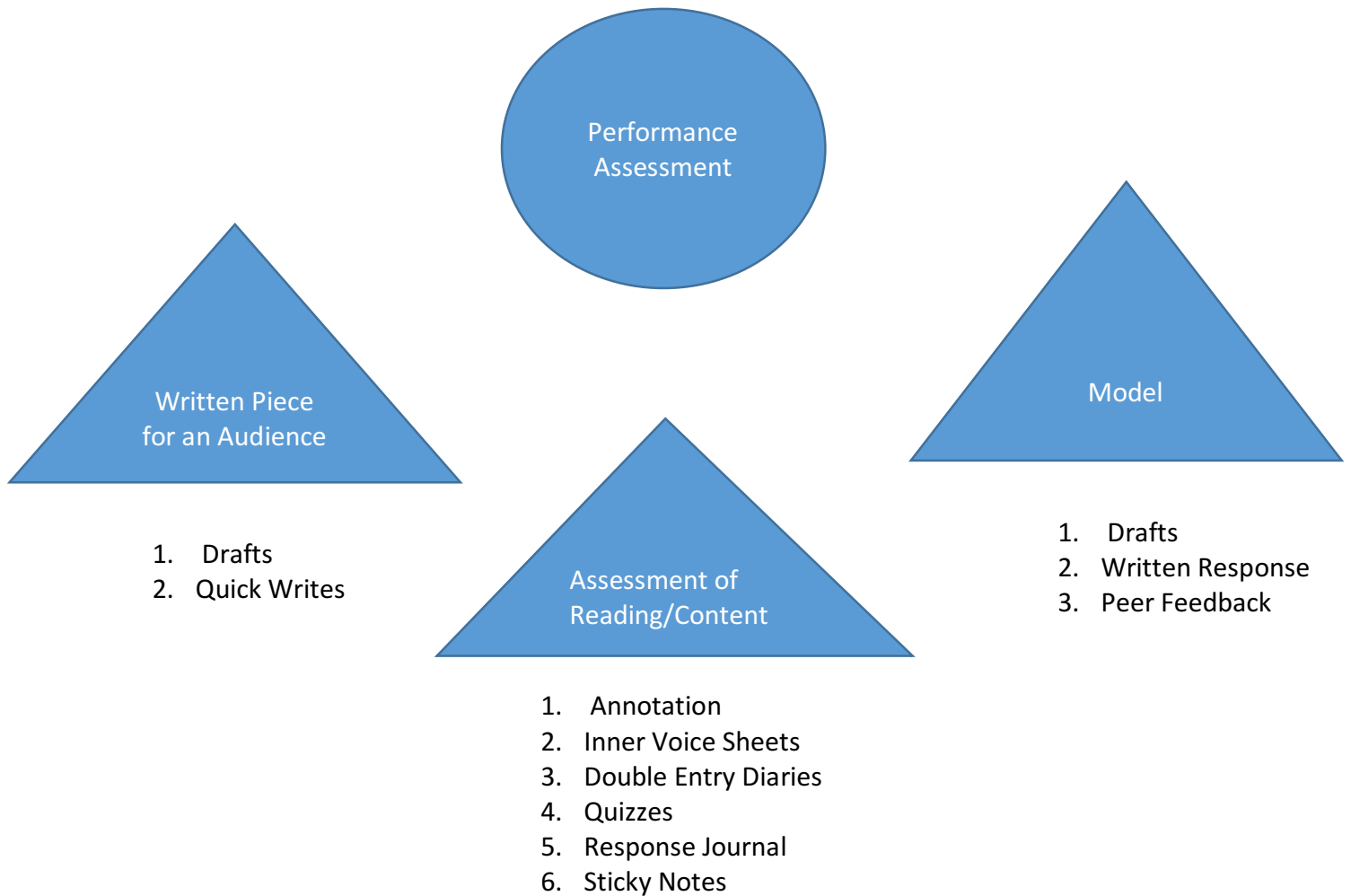


## 1. Provide Clear Goals to **Get** and **GIVE** Feedback.

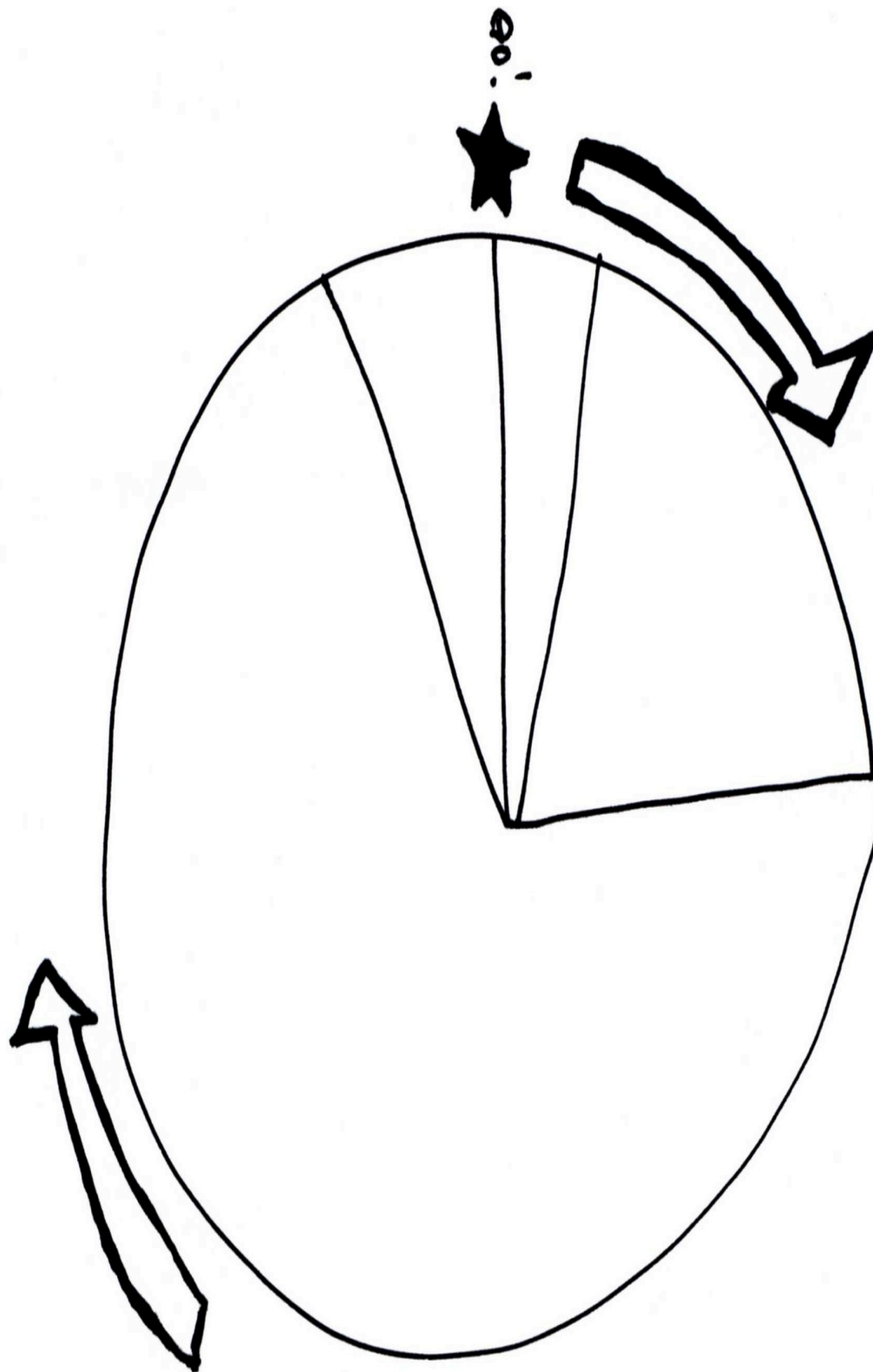
**Unit Summary:** Students will study the Syrian Refugee Crisis as a case study to build awareness about the political and social effects that humanitarian crises have on individuals and world stability.

<b>Long-Term Targets</b>	<b>Provocative Questions</b>	<b>Big and Small “Makes”</b>
<p><b>I can analyze a humanitarian crisis to discuss the implications of political and social upheavals on individuals and the world (US, nearby countries, countries accepting refugees).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can identify how political upheaval affects social upheaval.</li> <li>• I can discuss the differences between refugees, asylees, immigrants, and migrants.</li> <li>• I can explain different challenges each population faces.</li> </ul>	<p>Is the United States losing its humanity?</p> <p>How do I decide when to take action and if I choose to, what can I do?</p> <p>Should the US resettle its “fair share” of refugees? Why?</p> <p>Is everything destined to be or can I change my fate?</p>	<p><b>Reflection Journal</b></p> <p><b>Open Letter:</b> Create awareness and take a position about an issue connected to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Using examples of political and social upheaval, current events, and stories students will support their position with evidence.</p> <p><b>Annotations and Think Sheets</b></p> <p><b>Awareness, Empathy, and Action Summit</b> (preparation, performance, and reflection)</p>
<p><b>I can use thinking strategies to read and write complex text.</b></p>		<p><b>Learning Target</b></p> <p><b>Reflection:</b> My Growth as a Reader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before and After Reflection Letters to Tovani</li> <li>• Annotations and Think Sheets</li> </ul>
<p><b>I can logically and politely argue my position with someone who has a different point of view.</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotations and Think Sheets</li> <li>• Open Letter</li> <li>• Awareness, Empathy, and Action Summit</li> </ul>

## 2. Design Assessments That Give Students a Way to Demonstrate What They Know, Need and Have Mastered



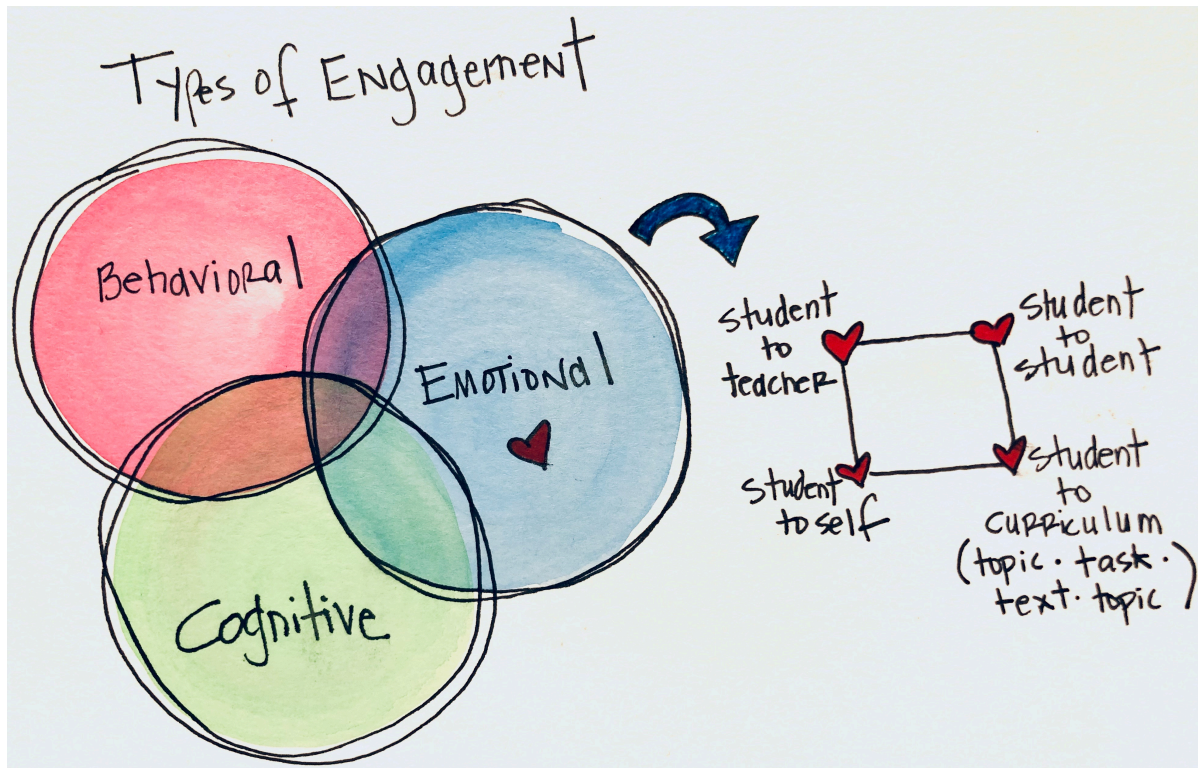
3. Scaffold Learning in the Form of Mini-Lessons, Small Groups, and Conferences



<b>Topic</b>	<b>Task</b>
<p><b>Compelling topic brings the need to know and purpose so that students care to learn</b></p> <p>The topic gives cohesiveness to the unit of study. It is the “what” students are learning about, often connected to specific content knowledge. Although students may be able to meet the standards without an engaging topic, a compelling, relevant topic helps students to develop their skills more deeply as readers and writers as they engage with increasingly complex text. The best topics teach the standards through real-world issues, original research, primary source documents, and the opportunity to engage with the community. They lend themselves to the creation of authentic tasks and products.</p>	<p><b>The culminating assignment – a product or performance task</b></p> <p>The culminating task gives students the opportunity to read for and write with specific textual evidence and to meaningfully apply the standards (targets). This is different from just writing “about” what one has read. The best tasks give students to opportunity to address authentic need and an authentic audience related to the topic.</p>
<b>Targets</b>	<b>Text</b>
<p><b>Learning targets are derived from the literacy and content standards that students are expected to meet</b></p> <p>The learning targets name what students need to know and be able to do. They are derived from the standards and informed by analysis of the assessment of the standard. (Some say, “The standard is not the standard, the assessment of the standard is the standard.”) Learning targets are contextualized to the topic, prepare students for and guide the task, and ensure proper, deep analysis of the text. Pay particular attention to what type of texts students will need to read in order to master specific standards and targets.</p>	<p><b>Complex texts with a variety of text structures that students will read closely, to ensure that students experience a volume of reading at their independent and instructional reading level</b></p> <p>Text is the primary vehicle through which the topic is taught. Carefully selected texts at the text complexity band for a given grade level give students access to the topic and content targets through close and careful reading. Attention to text selection ensures that students can practice specific literacy standards so that they have deep access to the topic and learning going forward. Choose text judiciously to ensure it is worthy in terms of the knowledge it will help students build about the world and the opportunities it presents for students to master specific literacy standards.</p>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Tend</b>
<p><b>Time for students to read, write, and think</b></p> <p>This is not a luxury but a necessity. Not all students run by the same time clock and expecting all students to master skills and complete tasks at the same time is not reasonable. There is more content than time to cover it. Teachers have to decide what matter most to students learning and plan with realistic goals.</p>	<p><b>Tending to students emotional and instructional needs</b></p> <p>Paying attention to students’ needs and strengths helps teachers to make an emotional connection with students which helps them care about the content and skills when the learning gets difficult.</p>

# Learning Targets Increase All Three Types of Engagement.

From: *Why Do I Have to Read This?* (Stenhouse, 2021) Tovani



Fredricks, J.A. P.C. Blumentfeld, and A.H. Paris. 2004. "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of Evidence." *Review of Educational Research* 74 (1): 59-109.

**Long Term Target 1:** I can use thinking strategies to read and write complex text.

<b>Daily/Weekly Targets</b>	<b>Whole Class Mini-Lessons</b>	<b>Make(s) Show what students know and need</b>
I can manipulate my inner voice to “talk back” to text.	Model what a conversation and waste of time voice sounds like when I read.	<b>Sticky notes</b> in novel
I can study a model to inform my writing.	Share my copy of an annotated Open Letter. Highlight what I notice about the first half of the letter.	<b>Class Anchor Chart</b> <b>Student “noticings”</b> for the second half of the letter
<p>I can ask questions to isolate a confusion.</p> <p>I can use my questions to help me decide what to read, skip, and adjust reading rate.</p>	<p>Model how to chunk text and how to ask questions that I care about to set a purpose for what I read and what I skip.</p> <p>Model how to chunk text and how to ask questions that I care about to set a purpose for what I read and what I skip.</p> <p>Model how questions drive my reading. Model questions that I ask that isolate my confusion.</p>	<p><b>Annotations</b> on nonfiction text</p> <p><b>Inner Voice Sheet</b> for novel</p>
<p>I can answer some of my questions with a possible, probable answer using my background knowledge the clues left by the author.</p> <p>I can use my background knowledge to infer how a character acts and feels.</p>	<p>Model how I use my questions to draw an inference. Wonder, look for clues left by the author and then use my background knowledge to interpret what the clues might mean</p> <p>How would I feel in this situation?</p> <p>Where do I know about this topic?</p>	<b>Inner Voice Sheet</b> for novel
<p>I can collect relevant information (facts, statistics, examples, quotes) that connect to my argument/position.</p> <p>I can explain why my collected information is relevant.</p>	Model how to use a double entry diary. Show and example of my relevant information and how I think it connects to my position.	<p><b>Double Entry Diary:</b> Right side</p> <p><b>Double Entry Diary:</b> Left side</p>



## **Learning Targets: COMMON CHALLENGES**

Excerpt From: Ron Berger, Leah Rugen, Libby Woodfin & Expeditionary Learning. **“Leaders of Their Own Learning.”**

### **Learning Targets That Are Owned by the Teacher, but Not by the Students**

Build student ownership. Many teachers succeed in creating and posting learning targets; some schools even require this practice. But posting learning targets and reading them aloud are not enough. Teachers and students should discuss the learning targets to ensure that students fully embrace and understand them and can collaborate with the teacher in tracking them.

### **Learning Targets versus Doing Targets**

Focus on learning. As mentioned previously, learning targets should describe what students will learn as a result of a lesson, learning expedition, or unit of study, not what they will do as the task—“I can use metaphor to convey a complex emotion,” not “I can complete or fill out my note catcher.”

### **Learning Targets That Are Too Complex**

Watch your language. Aim for clarity when crafting learning targets. Those that pack in too much information may confuse students or make a teacher second-guess the intended learning and assessment. Watch out for learning targets that contain the following: two verbs (e.g., “I can identify and analyze”); compound content (e.g., “I can describe the ecosystems of coral reefs and forests”); broad scope of content (e.g., “I can evaluate continuity and change over the course of US history”).

### **Learning Targets That Are Too Big or Too Small**

Get the scope right. Often it can be challenging to create long-term and supporting learning targets that efficiently pace life in the classroom and stimulate rich learning. Long-term learning targets should be tied directly to standards, and each may take one to two weeks to address completely. Nested within each long-term learning target, supporting learning targets (typically three to five) guide the daily lessons that support students to meet standards. Careful planning and practice will help teachers craft learning targets that don't try to cover too much or that are overly narrow.

### **Learning Targets That Are Not Used on a Daily Basis**

Use it or lose it. Learning targets must be displayed, referred to, owned by the students, and worked toward in a meaningful way. Learning targets that exist only on paper don't support students' engagement, motivation, and learning.

### **Learning Targets That Require All Lower-Level Thinking and Skills**

Mix it up. Learning targets should reflect different levels of thinking, from the foundational knowledge level (e.g., name, identify, describe) to higher-order skills (e.g., analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate). Check to see that sets of learning targets ramp up the rigor in the classroom.

### **Learning Targets That Are Not Linked to a Powerful Context for Learning**

Make them meaningful. Learning targets are most powerful when they guide learning experiences that are engaging for students and are part of a compelling curriculum that requires critical thinking and problem solving.

### **Learning Targets That Are Mismatched to Assessments**

Check the alignment. The method of assessment should match the learning target. A target that asks a student to analyze would be assessed not with a multiple-choice quiz, but rather with a written response or verbal teacher-student conference. Well-matched assessments are both effective and efficient.

### **Learning Targets That Miss the Heart of the Common Core State Standards**

Get to the heart of the matter. If learning targets and assessments touch on standards but don't address them fully, sharply, and deeply, teachers will miss an opportunity to help their students develop the critical thinking skills emphasized by the Common Core State Standards. Teachers must read and discuss the standards carefully to create effective learning targets.

### **Learning Targets That Are Different for Different Groups of Students**

Ensure rigor and equity. Learning targets should remain consistent for all students, whereas the instruction employed to help students meet them is differentiated to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners (with the possible exception of students working toward an IEP-based diploma that calls for curriculum modifications or for those participating in other alternative pathways).

## Different Types of Targets to Consider When Planning

“Understanding is the ability to think and act flexibly with what one knows.” David Perkins

**Process/Skill Targets** (How learners use critical thinking to process reading, writing, problem solving, & discussing)

- I can monitor my inner voice to recognize confusion.
- I can manipulate my inner voice to clear confusion.
- I can use literary devices to analyze plot.

**Writer’s Craft Targets** (How learners notice, analyze, & emulate what authors do to convey meaning)

- I can use a mentor text to inform my writing.
- I can analyze craft moves to infer author’s intent.

**Understanding Targets** (How learners access & use new concepts-10-year rule)

- I can use background knowledge about different cultures to better understand what drives people’s actions.
- I can compare literary works to people and situations today to better understand the world around me.
- I can articulate how characterization affects plot.

**Knowledge/Content Targets** (How learners demonstrate facts/knowledge about the subject matter)

- I can define literary elements.
- I can retell plot.

**Behavioral Targets** (How learners engage in behaviors to get smarter about their task)

- I can gather the tools I need to complete the task at hand.
- I can use my thought partners to discuss my thinking.

Rule of Thumb

**3-week unit:** 1 Long-term and 5 nested/supporting targets

**9-week unit:** 3 Long-term targets and 5 nested/supporting per long-term targets

Tovani, 2020

<p>Long Term Learning Target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Targets</li> </ul>	<p>Assessments</p> <p><i>(Most are graded with points, but not all – See “Why I Grade This Way” for more information)</i></p>
<p>I can demonstrate how reading makes me smarter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can reread a chunk of text and connect new information to something that I already know.</li> <li>I can make a picture in my head of something I’ve read in order to remember what I’ve read.</li> <li>I can use my background knowledge to interpret clues left by the author.</li> <li>I can go beyond the words on the page to infer meaning.</li> </ul>	<p>Annotated text            Double entry diaries            Inner voice sheets            Reading response logs            Exit Tickets            Journal Responses</p> <p>Final Essays/Products/Projects that illuminate big content ideas (based on themes, units of study, required texts, etc.)</p>
<p>I can use my discussion group to sustain my reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can discuss with my group members to clear up my confusion about a text.</li> <li>I can discuss with my group members to expand my knowledge and understanding of a text.</li> </ul>	<p>Journal Reflections/exit tickets</p> <p>Group Observation Forms</p> <p>Scripts of/quotes from group discussions</p>
<p>I can get unstuck and build endurance for reading to get smarter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can recognize when my mind is wandering.</li> <li>I can reread a chunk of text that I don’t understand and ask a question in order to isolate confusion.</li> <li>I can read for extended periods of time.</li> </ul>	<p>Response journals</p> <p>Exit tickets: What is causing confusion?</p> <p>Sticky notes with questions placed in the text where the reading becomes confusing.</p> <p>Annotated text            Double entry diaries            Inner voice sheets            Reading response logs</p> <p>Stamina chart (over time) in reading journal</p>
<p>I can get unstuck and build endurance for writing to get smarter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can increase my writing stamina by producing more than one draft of writing.</li> <li>I can find others who will read my writing and give me useful feedback.</li> <li>I can use published work to mentor my writing.</li> <li>I can show courtesy to my readers by attending to spelling, punctuation, and grammar.</li> </ul>	<p>Drafts in writing folder</p> <p>Revisions and edits on drafts</p> <p>List of editors in writer’s journal</p>

	Running list in writer's journal of what I notice other writers doing
<p>I can use writing to demonstrate and clarify my thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can reread what I've written and recognize parts that don't make sense.</li> <li>• I can use conferences with my teacher and writing group to revise confusing parts.</li> <li>• I can re-enter a piece of writing and make changes that reflect how my thinking has evolved.</li> </ul>	<p>Drafts in writing folders with revisions/annotations</p> <p>Exit Tickets</p> <p>Journal reflections/writing</p>
<p>I can use writing as a way to create awareness and gain access to power in the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting learning targets vary by project/product</li> </ul>	<p>Final products/projects with real-world purpose and audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-5 minute i-movie that creates awareness in peers surrounding a contemporary issue</li> <li>• A commentary sent to the local paper stating a position on a local issue</li> <li>• An annotated summer reading list</li> <li>• Book reviews</li> <li>• A recommendation to teachers/ departments about the use of current works students are reading or should read.</li> <li>• Letters to various organizations/audiences</li> </ul>

From: *So What do They Really Know?* Tovani, 2011

**Open Letter Learning Target Rubric-** Your challenge is to create an awareness about a sensitive issue connected to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Using political and social upheaval examples, current events, and stories, write an open letter to someone who needs to hear your argument. Be sure to use evidence to support your position.

**Name:**

**Final Open Letter Due:** June 27, 2018

**Editing as a courtesy to the reader:**

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can capitalize, punctuate, and spell correctly as a courtesy to my readers.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can embed quotes correctly so I don't interrupt the flow of my message.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can cite my source correctly to give credit to the thinker.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I demonstrate improvement by attaching drafts.

**Thinking Behind the Essay:**

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can describe an issue surrounding the current Syrian refugee crisis.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can take a position on the current Syrian refugee crisis argument.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can embed one statistic and one fact to support my position.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can share a short narrative that illustrates something about the Syrian refugee crisis.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can reference an historical event about a past treatment of refugees.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10 points: I can call my readers to action by asking them to do something that will create more awareness about the Syrian refugee crisis.

Student total: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 100 points

Teacher total: \_\_\_\_\_ out of 100 points

Here's what I want you to know about my process:

## Upcoming Workshops in the Series

Participants are welcome to attend any and all workshops.

October 26, 2020 4:00-4:45 EST **Conversations with Cris**

- This session is designed to give participants who attended the October 19<sup>th</sup> workshop, **Targets:** What Do We Want Students to Know and Be Able to Do? a chance to chat with Cris and share successes, ask questions, and get feedback on instructional moves. **Space is limited.**

November 2, 2020 4:00-5:30 EST **Tasks:** How Do We Know What Students Know and Need?

This fourth workshop in the series, will focus on GETTING feedback by asking students to complete tasks worthy of their time. Cris will show how Targets and Tasks fit together so that students can reflect on their learning.

November 9, 2020 4:00-4:45 EST **Conversations with Cris**

- This session is designed to give participants who attended the November 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop, **Tasks:** How Do We Know What Students Know and Need? a chance to chat with Cris and share successes, ask questions, and get feedback on instructional moves. **Space is limited.**
- November 16, 2020 4:00-5:30 **Texts:** Finding the Right Text So Students Can Access Content and Curriculum

In order for students to grow their comprehension, vocabulary, and background knowledge they need a variety of text structures that match their reading level. When students can “uncover” curriculum and content they grow as readers, writers, and thinkers. This session will focus on how to build text sets and find a variety of reading material to meet a variety of students’ needs.

- November 17, 2020 4:00-4:45 EST **Conversations with Cris**

This session is designed to give participants who attended the November 16<sup>th</sup> workshop, **Texts:** Finding the Right Text So Students Can Access Content and Curriculum a chance to chat with Cris and share successes, ask questions, and get feedback on instructional moves. **Space is limited.**

- November 30, 2020 4:00-5:30 EST **Tying it All Together:** Long-Term Planning Drives the Day-to-Day

The last workshop in this series will focus on how long-term planning can make day-to-day instruction less grueling. Cris will show how anticipating a few student needs will help teachers plan ahead for those tough to engage students.

- December 7, 2020 4:00-4:45 EST **Conversations with Cris**

This last conversation with Cris is open to anyone who attended any of the series workshops. Participants will have a chance to chat with Cris and share successes, ask questions, and get feedback on instructional moves. **Space is limited.**