Narrator: Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

Quote on screen: Learning is easier when learners understand what goal they are trying to achieve, the purpose of achieving the goal, and the specific attributes of success. Chappuis (2002)

Effective classroom assessment is essential to learning. Assessment provides students and teachers the information they need to make decisions to advance learning.

T: And so now we’ll move on to co-constructing criteria.

When assessment is an interactive, collaborative process, it also helps students to develop independence in learning by teaching them how to learn. Hattie and Timperley (2007) identify three questions that guide learning:

⇒ Where am I going?
⇒ How am I going? And
⇒ Where to next?

These questions also focus students’ thinking on learning how to learn by drawing their attention to specific steps in the learning process.

Learning goals describe, in student friendly language, what students are to know and be able to do by the end of a period of learning.

Success criteria describe, in specific terms, what successful attainment of the learning goal looks like. By identifying the learning goals and what success looks like, teachers answer the first question, “Where am I going?” and lay the foundation for students to be able to determine how they are doing and what they should be doing next.

In this video, you will see students and teachers:

⇒ Identifying and sharing Learning Goals

T1: Let’s take a look at the learning goal together. As you know, our learning goal is what we need to be able to learn by the end of the lesson. The learning goal was “investigate and explain how a fraction, decimal and percent are related”.

T2: You have your learning goal sheets in front of you, so if someone could just restate the learning goal for me. Chris.

S: Select the evidence that supports my point of view.
AER GAINS Video Series – *Learning Goals and Success Criteria* Transcript

⇒ *developing Success Criteria*

T: You’ve read over the lab now and so what I’d like you to identify is assessment criteria that you think would be relevant to this lab. So we’re going to brainstorm as a class now and I’d like you to come up with as many criteria as you possibly could.

⇒ *working together to develop a common understanding of these goals and criteria.*

T: So you’ve had a chance to think about the criteria that are on the board. You’ve had a chance to share with the person beside you. Okay? And now we’re going to look at building our final list that you can use as a checklist.

*Once goals and criteria are established, students and teachers use them as a basis for*

⇒ *Providing Descriptive Feedback*

T: Now your second paragraph here really makes some excellent connections. So, you’re talking about the reasons that you chose the longhouse to draw and you’re talking about your ancestors, and you also related it to the PowerPoint presentation that you did in class a couple weeks ago. So that’s fantastic – I think you’ve made some great connections. Did you want to tell me about any of those connections that you made?

S: Well in my connections why I related it to my ancestors because in our PowerPoint mine was on the North-East Woodlands Iroquois tribe and the North-East Woodlands is where we live now, so that really could have been where our ancestors first lived and had any history to do with the First Nations peoples.

T: That’s excellent. So your first two paragraphs were fantastic. Now, looking at your third paragraph I’m going to agree with Danielle. I don’t think it’s quite on topic. You’re supposed to be writing, if we look back over here at the how, describing the steps that you did to create this piece. So I think you got a little off-topic in that third paragraph and you’re still doing some relating it to yourself. So if you want to include that part like Danielle said in the second paragraph and then rewrite your third paragraph stating the steps that you took to actually draw that particular piece, OK? So I’ll write that down for you in a second Emily, and can you share the feedback with me that you gave to Danielle?

⇒ *Developing students’ peer and Self Assessment skills*

S: Jeremy, one thing you did well was use correct punctuation. One other thing you did well was defining examples of physical and chemical changes. Something you can work on is using tools to confirm your spelling.

T: Okay, in terms of the learning goal, I need you to indicate to me where you are right now and where you need to go next.

T: All right, Cameron, what about yourself? How do you feel in terms of learning goal so far?

S2: Um, I organized the evidence into groups and separated the different points of view regarding the argument.
T: And you feel you have enough information on both sides that you’ve got what you need to move forward?

S2: Yeah.

⇒ Setting Individual Goals

T: Your job today, grade six, is to use all of the feedback that you’ve been given to create a learning goal for yourself, keeping in mind the criteria we just talked about. I’m going to give you a few minutes to do that now.

When teachers use classroom assessment for learning, both students and teachers notice positive results.

T: It’s been actually wonderful for the students. You know, setting um, learning goals and success criteria for them has made things much easier for them and I am seeing positive results in, in better work samples. There’s no guess work. They know exactly what they have to do. And they’re the ones - with a little bit of guidance of course - that are coming up with the success criteria. So, they know what they have to do exactly because they are the ones that told me what it was that they needed to do in order to be um, effective, for example writers, readers, whatever the task may be.

S: I think it’s good to go through it like as not as a rubric but as the goals because we all go through it verbally, so it’s kind of like we go through it in steps so it kind of like reminds us and like we understand like what we’re exactly doing and what’s expected. And if we ever need to like obviously go back to the rubric just to kind of like see a visual, but we also have it in our minds because we’ve all gone through it as a class. So make sure like everybody understands exactly what’s expected. So I think that’s like a really good way of looking at it.

Quote on screen: Assessment for learning is about far more than testing more frequently or providing teachers with evidence so that they can revise instruction, although these steps are part of it. In addition, we now understand that assessment for learning must involve students in the process. Stiggins (2002)

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Narrator:
Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

Quote on screen:
Students can hit any target they can see that holds still for them. Stiggins (2006)

Learning goals are brief statements that describe, for students, what they should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction. The Ontario curriculum identifies the knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire. When teachers transform expectations into learning goals, students are empowered to be more active participants in the learning. Like the specific expectations, learning goals represent a subset of the knowledge and skills students must master to successfully achieve the overall expectations.

What makes a learning goal effective? Here are some things to consider:

T1: We started with the overall expectations and the specific expectations for this particular unit dealing with simplifying polynomial and rational expressions. We first of all have to look at – what is the knowledge and skills that the students need and how we’re going to get to that point.

T2: Overall expectations first.

T3: Okay, so the overall expectation is this one, manipulate numerical and polynomial expressions and solve first degree equations. We’re not doing first degree equations. So just manipulate numerical and polynomial expressions.

T2: The specific expectation says add and subtract polynomials with up to two variables using a variety of tools.

Having identified the knowledge and skills to be addressed, teachers consider the scope of the specific expectations. Sometimes, even specific expectations need to be broken down into smaller increments, so that learning is appropriately scaffolded.

T1: So we’re simplifying. Then we have to add or subtract to simplify. So before they can simplify they have to...

T2: Group like terms.

T1: But then they can’t group if they don’t know “like and unlike terms”.

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AER GAINS Video Series – Learning Goals and Success Criteria Transcript

T2: We have to teach them what a polynomial expression is. We need to identify what is a term.

T1: So basically those steps then would be our learning goals for this lesson which is to ultimately manipulate these expressions and that’s how we’re going to get there.

Text on screen: LEARNING GOALS
I can identify polynomial expressions.
I can identify like and unlike terms.
I can group like terms.
I can simplify polynomial expressions through addition and subtraction.

“Unpacking” the overall and specific expectations can result in a progression of incremental learning goals, which build student’s knowledge and skills so that they can achieve the expectations. When knowledge and skills are broken out and scaffolded into individual elements, students and teachers are able to assess more accurately what they are doing well, and where they should be focusing their efforts to improve.

T1: So by focusing in on one specific criteria or one specific learning goal, it allows me to pinpoint where the students strengths and weaknesses are. From there we can do quick little checks, you know, whether it’s circulating through the class or whether it’s a quick little exit card on the way out to see – Yes, I meet that learning goal or – no I don’t.

Well, again, looking at our, our learning goals from this unit, we’ve been working on, for the last few days things such as adding and subtracting polynomials, multiplying polynomials...

It’s critical that students and teacher share a common understanding of the learning goal. When developing the goals, pay careful attention to the language.

Text on screen: USES STUDENT-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

T1: When we’re writing our learning goals, we want to make sure that it’s going to be in a language that the students are going to understand. Often many in … the mathematics expectations they’re very complicated and they’re sometimes written in language that the students don’t, or aren’t able to grasp. So we often will re-write the expectations in a simpler language for the students. In this particular case the simplifying. Do they know what it means to simplify polynomials? That simplifying is a key word because it’s a key descriptive that they will find when handling these types of questions or problems. Hopefully when we’re finished, they will be able to tell me what that means in their own language.

Text on screen: BRIEF AND CONCISE

T2: So Nat, now that we’ve got the learning goals up there, are they meaningful to the students? Are they in the right language? Do you think they’re going to know what they mean?

T3: Well so we’ve used words like identify, they know that. They…like and unlike terms, probably not but that’s part of what we’re teaching them today so I guess that’s okay. They’ll probably ask us questions. That’s a good thing. Grouping, they know how to group. And I think it’s really important to keep the word simplify in there because that is a critical word.
AER GAINS Video Series – *Learning Goals and Success Criteria* Transcript

Text on screen: VERBS ARE SPECIFIC AND OBSERVABLE

*Pay particular attention to the verb. It needs to be something specific, and observable. Abstract verbs like ‘understand’ or ‘appreciate’ make it difficult for students to have a clear target of what they are striving to achieve.*

Text on screen: STATED FROM THE STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

T1: ...that it must be phrased from the student’s perspective. Right?

T2: I agree, that’s why I have up on my board, “By the end of class I will be able to do something”, or “I will know” or “I will explain, I will identify”, to make it personal for them.

*Some specific expectations do meet the criteria for learning goals, and could be shared with little or no alteration. Here’s a specific expectation from Gr. 7 Science and Technology Understanding Matter and Energy: identify the components of a solution (e.g. solvent, solute)*

Text on screen: EFFECTIVE LEARNING GOALS

*The statement identifies the knowledge the student is to demonstrate. The verb is specific, and the student will be able to determine whether the goal has been met. The learning is clearly defined in language appropriate for most intermediate students. Note that the subject specific vocabulary, which is part of the learning for students, is maintained. The statement is brief and concise, and when it is shared with students, the teacher will rephrase this from a student perspective as: “I am learning to identify the components of a solution.” Finally, the statement identifies an incremental step in a progression of learning. Here are some learning goals which identify additional knowledge and skills to build student understanding:*

Text on screen:

⇒ identify the components of a solution (e.g., solvent, solute)
⇒ identify solutes and solvents in various kinds of solutions
⇒ describe the concentration of a solution in qualitative terms
⇒ describe the difference between saturated and unsaturated solutions

T1: It’s an integral part of my lessons every day. Not just to have the learning goals but to discuss them with the students before we begin so I can identify which students grasp what we’re talking about that day and which students need that further explanation so that they’re going to be on track for that day’s lesson.

Quote on screen: When we invest time up front to build the vision [of what students are to be learning], we gain it back later in increased student motivation and the resulting higher-quality work. Chappuis (2009)

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Segment 3 – Sharing and Clarifying Learning Goals (8:19)

Narrator: Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

Quote on screen: Teachers should continually help students clarify the intended learning as the lessons unfold – not just at the beginning of a unit of study. Chappuis (2002)

Learning goals identify, for students, where they are going in their learning.

T1: We use goals to help guide us through what you know our task is at, on that particular day. And those goals that we use on a daily basis, they’re actually related to the curriculum expectations that are provided by the ministry, by the government.

Once identified, the learning goals become an integral part of the learning process, guiding the teacher’s instruction, as well as the student’s efforts to focus their learning.

T1: So what I’d like you to do is think about today’s learning goal and I’d like someone just to draw our attention to it please. If someone could read it for me. John.

S1: I can gather evidence that identifies different points of view.

For students to be able to independently monitor their progress, they need to have a clear understanding of the goals. This understanding begins to be developed when the goals are shared, and continues to grow as instruction progresses. Teachers facilitate this understanding by:

- Displaying the goals in the classroom
- Asking students to record the goals in writing

T: So what I’d like you to do is I would like you to copy the learning goal on to your sheet ...

- Having students reflect on and discuss their meaning

T: So I’m going to ask you to take a minute and talk to your partner, or your threesome, just about what the learning goals are and what do they mean.

During learning, students deepen their understanding of the goals as teachers make explicit connections between the goals, the learning activities, and the opportunities students will have to demonstrate their achievement of the learning goals.

T: I would you to just take a moment and talk about where you think you are in terms of your learning goal because remember, it’s leading us to our culminating task, the big project that we’re going to do at the end.

By explicitly connecting feedback from teacher, peer and self to the learning goals, students continue to strengthen their understanding.
T: So it sounds like to me that you girls are at the stage where you’re planning out what you’re going to say in your final project. So you obviously feel comfortable with the learning goal then, that you’ve got all the information you need to get yourselves organized. So you’re going to make sure that you offer up both points of view for whoever you choose?

Text on screen: TEACHER FEEDBACK

T: All right, Cameron, what about yourself? How do you feel in terms of the learning goal so far?

Text on screen: SELF ASSESSMENT

S: I was able to separate the different arguments based on their point of view but that I was lacking a bit of information on one side of the argument.

T: Okay. So obviously then, the next step for you is going to be to...

S: Get more information on that side.

*Asking students specific questions about the learning goals brings greater clarity.*

T: Are there any things in those learning goals that you don’t understand? Are there any words that you don’t understand? Are there any words that you haven’t seen before, that you haven’t worked with before? Matt?

S: Polynomials.

T: It’s kind of hard to do all of the work that’s up there with a polynomial expression if you don’t know what a polynomial is.

*When learning goals use subject-specific terminology, teachers signal the importance of the words, and can use the learning goals as a starting point for review or new learning.*

T: I’m going to ask you to take about 30 seconds to think about what it is, then share it with your partner. And then when the partners think they have something, we will share it together.

Who would like to share with the group what a polynomial is?

S: An algebraic equation or expression – expression – which consists of addition, subtraction and letters. Is that right?

*Another way to ensure that students have a deep understanding of the learning goal is to develop, or “co-construct”, it with them. The teacher and students begin with the specific expectation, and they work together to develop a statement that is meaningful and understood by all.*

T: We’ve talked about learning goals a lot and we talked about the fact that the learning goal comes from the document that teachers use to figure out what you need to know. One of the problems with using a learning goal that comes right out of the document is that sometimes the language that’s used is difficult to understand. So this morning we’re going to take a look at the learning goal and we’re going
to see which words are key words, which words we understand and which words we can get rid of, or change and use a different word. And hands up, I’d like to know some of the words that you think we absolutely need to keep in there. Keegan.

Text on screen: co-construct the learning goals from the specific expectations with the student

S: Explain.

T: Explain, I think that’s a good one too. Explain. We need that word, okay? And how have I asked you to explain this assignment? I’ve asked you to explain it in two ways. What’s one?

*With the learning goals clearly established, both the teacher and the students are able to measure progress toward achieving the goals at the end of each day’s learning, and to determine next steps.*

T1: At the end of the class, you’ll reflect on how close you are to the learning goal and you’ll also write down any steps that you need to take to get you there.

T2: Okay, so at this point in the lesson, we are going to assess whether you have met the learning goal. So the final learning goal over there says that you are going to be able to, by the end of the class, simplify polynomial expressions through addition and subtraction. What I would like you to do on your white board is copy this polynomial expression and then I would like you to simplify it. Once you’re done, put your white board up and I will verify that your answer is correct.

*By ensuring that students clearly understand the learning goal, teachers set the stage for students to be able to focus their efforts on achieving the goal, monitoring their progress, and setting their own goals.*

T1: It’s challenged me, um, to think a little bit differently. Initially, it looked overwhelming. Um, I sat down with some other teachers, talked about it a little bit and set a learning goal, a one-sentence learning goal for a lesson that I already had and worked more towards that. And it’s made a, a major difference. As far as marking, it’s been a pleasure to mark their work because the majority of their work is much better than it was even early on in the year when we were just getting into learning goals and setting success criteria, and they weren’t quite so good at it. Um, it’s improved even considerably since then.

Quote on screen: Many teachers who have tried to develop their students’ self-assessment skills have found that the first and most difficult task is to get students to think of their work in terms of a set of goals. Black et al (2004)

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Segment 4 – Developing Success Criteria (6:17)

Narrator:
Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

Quote on screen: In assessing the quality of a student’s work or performance, the teacher must possess a concept of quality appropriate to the task, and be able to judge the student’s work in relation to that concept. Sadler (1989)

Success criteria are standards or rules which students use to make judgements about the quality of performance. Students use success criteria to determine what progress they are making toward achieving learning goals. Criteria show what success “looks like”, and when used to assess, give both the teacher and the student feedback about learning. Whereas learning goals answer the question, “Where am I going?”, success criteria help students to answer the question, “How am I going?” When teachers help students understand the purpose and use of criteria, students grow increasingly more independent in being able to monitor their progress and make decisions about next steps in learning.

T: Now that we’ve had a chance to look at the assignment briefly, let’s talk about the success criteria. What are success criteria? We’ve been using those a lot the last few months.

S1: Guidelines to help you do assignments.

S2: A success criteria is a guide to your learning goal.

S3: It helps us to realize what we need to do, so we know when we’re doing well.

S4: We use the success criteria to help us with our next steps, because if we didn’t do something on the success criteria, then that would be our next step for what we would do next time.

With the learning goals established, teachers determine how students will demonstrate their learning by asking them to perform a task.

T: Let’s take a brief look at the assignment before we talk about our criteria for success. You will need two 10 x 10-centimeter grids: one rough copy and one final copy. Your job is to design a floor plan for an apartment...

Next, they determine the success criteria – what characteristics, traits or qualities will they look for in the student’s performance. The achievement chart for each subject provides a starting point for identifying the criteria. In the revised curriculum documents in the section on assessment and evaluation of student achievement teachers will find a list of descriptors and be able to determine specific descriptors of effectiveness for a particular product or performance – things such as accuracy, logic, significance, or depth. Descriptors help clarify for students the characteristic of the performance which is the focus of the assessment.
Looking at samples of student performance is another effective way to identify the success criteria.

T1: So I brought some of the work from first semester of my students for this project.

T2: Good idea. I think we could probably use this to help develop the success criteria. We want them to succeed, let’s tell them what we’re looking for to get success.

Collaborating with colleagues to develop assessments, and moderated marking, are some ways to reach consensus on criteria. Once teachers have identified them, the criteria are set out in an assessment tool, such as a rubric, checklist, t-chart, and shared with students. The criteria can also be co-constructed with students. Teachers bring a deep knowledge of standards and criteria to the assessment task, but they often remain unarticulated. Students are more successful and more engaged when they are clear on what success looks like on a given task. As they gain a deeper understanding of the criteria, their focus shifts from grades and marks...

S1: How many marks is this worth?

S2: Does this count?

...to a focus on learning.

T: All right, Matthew so can you tell me where you think you are, uh, in terms of today’s learning goal?

S: Um, well, I can sort and organize the different information and use it to improve my opinion.

T: Okay. Is there some specific side uh, for your opinion that you think you need to get some more information on or are you thinking, just overall you need to get a little more information?

S: Yeah, I think I need to get a little more information for the four...

T: Okay, excellent.

T: We were doing uh, peer assessment and it went nowhere. They’d read their friend’s work and say, “Oh, yeah, that’s great”, and they wouldn’t apply any criteria to it. The same for self assessment, they’d look over their own work and think they were done. Well, now that they have success criteria, when they’re looking at someone’s work, whether it’s their own or a classmate’s, there’s focus and they know exactly what they’re looking for and they can tell um, their peer, “This is missing, this is what’s here, here is what you need to do to get yourself to the next uh, next step to be more effective”. And it’s, it’s really worked for them.

Quote on screen: Setting clear targets for student learning involves more than posting an instructional goal for students to see. It also requires elaboration of the criteria by which student work will be judged. Shepard (2001)

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Segment 5 – Helping Students Understand Criteria (6:54)

Narrator:
Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

Quote on screen: …when students take part in developing criteria, they are much more likely to understand what is expected of them, “buy in,” and then accomplish the task successfully. Gregory, Cameron, Davies (1997)

When performing a task to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, students use success criteria to make judgments about the quality of their performance. Success criteria define, for students, what they are striving to achieve, so it is critical to their success that they have a clear understanding of the criteria. Communicating the criteria to students orally or in writing is a sharing strategy commonly used in classrooms.

T: We’re nearing the end of this unit, unit two, and as with all of our units we have a, sort of a major task or an assignment that we take on towards the end of the unit. And this task is going to address a number of the things that we did throughout the unit. Looking at our, our learning goals from this unit, we’ve been working on, for the last few days things such as adding and subtracting polynomials, multiplying polynomials, factoring simple, complex trinomials, perfect squares and difference of squares, simplifying rational expressions and stating restrictions and then multiplying and dividing those rational expressions. Let’s just take a minute. I want you to read through the criteria there that is part of this particular task. So, our task here is to create this algebra domino challenge. So, each of these squares that we see here is a, is a specific tile that is part of an algebra domino. Each domino consists of two individual tiles. We’re going to simplify rational expressions through multiplying and dividing. And then one of the things we’re also going to be doing is of course, state all of our restrictions.

Using only an oral or written strategy for sharing criteria means that the needs of students with different learning styles may not be met. Further, when tasks and their success criteria are complex, students may miss or forget important details. Having students interact with the criteria in some way increases the likelihood that they understand the criteria, and so will be able to use it to provide the best evidence of their learning.

Text on screen: SHARING AND CLARIFYING CRITERIA

Teachers can use a variety of strategies to help students understand the criteria. For example:

- Discussing the criteria with examples from the task

T: Okay. You’ve had some time to look through the task and to read through some of the requirements that are there. We’re going to discuss a couple of sample solutions and then we’re going to look at what is involved on your part in order to make this happen. I do have a sample here that is partially completed. So you’ll notice that every tile is going to contain one rational expression and one polynomial expression. As you saw from the second step in our task here, is that there are a lot of other requirements that we need to satisfy when building our domino tiles. So, let’s take a look at those. First of all, it says the expressions you write must satisfy these conditions. So, polynomials, numerators and
denominators for each rational function must be quadratics without a constant common factor. So what does that mean that it has to be a quadratic? Natalie?

S: It has to have X-squared?

- **Encouraging students to ask clarifying questions about the criteria**

T: So are there any questions before we take a look at the sample solution about any of these requirements or criteria that we’ve put on the board? Natalie.

S: Is there like a way that we can do like a step-by-step process for like finding the first R all the way to the second one, because...

- **Modeling the application of the criteria to a sample**

T: We’re going to look now, do they meet those requirements that we’ve listed here? So, for starters, we have a polynomial beside a rational expression. They’re on different colored tiles which means we have to look for what operation to simplify? Are we looking for products or quotients when they’re side by side? When they’re side by side – Stacie?

S: Product?

- **Asking students to apply the criteria to a sample**

T: So you now have a sample solution that’s been provided to you and we have our success criteria checklist that we’re going to use for this sample one that I’ve provided. And you’re going to look through that sample and check to see if it meets those requirements. So you can do that now. And I encourage you to discuss or share any differences that you have, or even the similarities that you have, to make sure that you’re on track and finding all of the criteria for this particular sample.

S1: There’s a rational expressions that are beside each other, you have to have.

S2: So then you have to multiply.

S1: Yeah and you have x minus 5 on the top here, x minus 7 on the bottom here, so they can cancel each other out. So that criteria is there.

S2: Alright. And then on the bottom you had two polynomials and they had to have at least one perfect square and they’re both perfect squares. That works.

- **Asking students to use the criteria for peer and self assessment**

T: And then when you complete your task, you’re going to pass it along to one of your peers and they’re going to check yours and then we’re … before you submit it to me, you yourself are going to check your task to make sure it meets all of its criteria.
This segment presented a variety of ways to help students understand success criteria which the teacher has identified, so that learners are better able to monitor their learning. A powerful way to help students understand the criteria is to involve them in its development. This process is the topic of the next segment of this video.

Quote on screen: Are the criteria fully and carefully defined and open to all or are they nebulous and guarded so that students must guess what is being sought? Arter & Spandel (1991)

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Segment 6 – Co-constructing Success Criteria (8:42)

Narrator:
Learning goals and success criteria are critical pieces of information students need to be successful learners. Students and teachers must hold a common understanding of what is to be learned, and what successful achievement looks like. With explicit goals and criteria, students have the beginnings of what they need to become independent, self-monitoring learners.

Quote on screen: ...to the extent that criteria are shared, students (receive the) power to recognize strong performance, power to identify problems in weak performance, and power to use criteria to change and improve performance. Arter & Spandel (1991)

Text on screen: The teachers in this video use a four-step process for co-constructing criteria with students, developed by Gregory, Cameron, and Davies (1997):
Step 1: Brainstorm
Step 2: Sort and categorize
Step 3: Make and post a t-chart
Step 4: Add, revise, refine
For more information, see the Viewing Guide.

Co-constructing criteria engages students in the development of the criteria. Begin by asking students to brainstorm their ideas for criteria by asking, “What should we be looking for?”

T: You’ve read over the lab now and so what I’d like you to identify is assessment criteria that you think would be relevant to this lab. So we’re going to brainstorm as a class now and I’d like you to come up with as many criteria as you possibly could.

Sometimes, students will find this first step challenging. It may be that they don’t have enough experience with the task. One way to help overcome this challenge is to give them time to think and discuss with peers.

T: So what I’d like you to do now is think, pair and share in terms of with your, with your peers, I’d like you to brainstorm criteria that you think would be relevant to this lab.

Another approach is to give students anonymous samples of student work at various levels, and ask them to identify what is done well, and what needs improvement.

T: So we’re going to be looking at a couple of samples of opinion pieces. And what I want you to do when I give you these samples is I want you to take a few minutes and read over both of them very carefully and then I want you to choose which one you think is most effective. That’s the first part. The second part is, and before you talk to anybody, I want you to come up with some ideas in your head for why you think one is more effective than the other. Do you have any questions? Now what I’d like you to do is I would like you to take a few minutes at your table and I want you to talk about what makes this one most effective. We’re trying to find the elements of this written passage that make it better than the other one.

If you are introducing the co-construction process to students for the first time, choose a topic or task that the students are experienced with. Here, the teacher and students have co-constructed criteria for
organizing their math binder. As students share their brainstorming, record all ideas on chart paper, using the student’s own words.

T: So I want you to think about all the little details that you were thinking about when you were looking over the piece and tell us so we can put them on our chart paper and see them so we have something to compare our work to. So what are some of the things that made this sample effective? Taylor.

S1: He made his opinion clear and he gave examples.

T: So could you write that Melanie? Made his opinion clear and gave examples. Brendan.

S2: I found it was longer and gave more reasons how it could be changed and helped.

S3: It gave actual facts instead of just like what you thought.

S4: It listed consequences.

S5: They compared the prices between ... so he compared different facts to others.

T: So he used comparisons. Excellent.

S6: The words are more advanced and it’s better written.

T: So advanced vocabulary. And now let’s just clear up, that’s a good answer, let’s clear up, you said, and it’s better written. What would we be talking about when we look at something and say, it’s better written, it’s more well written? What are we talking about? Elliot you have an answer

S7: Like the structure of the sentences and the paragraphs and stuff like that.

Add your own ideas as well to ensure that all important criteria are listed.

T: Excellent job. We’ve got almost everything that needs to be up here for success criteria but there’s one thing missing that didn’t come out. We talked about, they’ve written their opinion, haven’t they. So if they’re giving us their opinion they’re also giving us their point of view, correct? We talked about the point of view. So do you all agree that the one success criteria that’s missing from here is a strong point of view? You’re writing an opinion piece where you’re trying to express your point of view, whether you agree or disagree with the fact. In this case it’s wearing helmets.

Step Two: Sort and categorize the brainstormed list. This can be done by the teacher....

T: Now while Christine is writing that for us, what I’ll do is I’ll take all of these success criteria and I’ll put them together in the necessary categories and post them on the wall so, one, you know exactly what you have to do. And two, when your work is done you can bring it up and you can look at the success criteria and see if you’ve got those in your writing.

...or sorting and categorizing can be done together with the students. Ask students to look for similar ideas or patterns. By clustering the details under headings, the criteria becomes more manageable.
T: Okay, so scientific terminology there. Okay. What I’m going to ask you to do now is we’re going to gather like criteria together. So we’ll just indicate it by using different colours, okay. So could anyone offer what criteria you think are similar and would belong with one another, okay? Ian?

S: Second group would be showing your work, peer assist – peer assessments, proper units, significant digits, answering the questions correctly. Perhaps the use of scientific terminology.

Step Three: Make and Post a T-Chart. Place the category titles on the left and the brainstormed ideas on the right.

Step Four: Add, Revise and Refine the criteria as necessary. Co-constructing criteria is an ongoing process. As learning progresses, additional criteria may come to light. As a class, make changes and refinements to the criteria listed on the t-chart.

T: Okay, so we basically have our criteria on the board. And what we did here on the chart paper is we clustered the information and so we have using tools, so we use the balance and the periodic table, we have our accuracy covered. And then we have communicating. When I look this over, there’s, there is something missing, okay. Is there anyone that could come up with what might potentially be missing here?

S: We need to make sure that we have it written down in the proper order.

The criteria that has been co-constructed becomes the basis for feedback by the teacher, as well as peer feedback, and self-monitoring by students. By keeping it visible as the learning proceeds, students and teacher are constantly reminded of where the learning is headed and what successful learning looks like.

Quote on screen: Sharing the design process, weaving the access to and use of quality criteria throughout learning, and keeping expectations and criteria present and public propel the concept of ‘explicit criteria’ into the practice of powerful teaching and learning.
Martin-Kniep, Picone-Zochia (2009)

A viewer’s guide has been developed to enhance your professional learning while viewing this video. The learning goals and success criteria inventory in this viewer’s guide is intended to help assess your current practice, guide your professional learning, and measure your growth over time as you continue to use this resource.