

Background and Rationale: Content Standards & Classroom Level Learning Goals

Establishing clear classroom level learning goals to provide targets for teaching and learning improves student achievement.

Standard benchmarks—statements of what students should know and be able to do—should describe learning requirements at the level of concepts and processes not at the detail level of specific facts or skills. Nor should content standard benchmarks designate specific curriculum or instructional approaches (*Cite Larry Scripts*).

Through a structured process adapted from the work of Rick Stiggins and the Assessment Training Institute, teachers are able to breathe life into standards and give them the legs they need to be marched into the classroom. Teachers do this by joining the benchmark(s) or portions of the benchmark(s) to specific curriculum of either the teacher's choice or mandated by the school or district. To successfully create classroom level learning goals, teachers must have some idea of the curriculum they will use to support students in achieving the learning required by the benchmark.

Classroom learning goals—developed from the marriage of content standards to curriculum—have the specificity and precision teachers need to plan classroom teaching and learning activities that standard benchmarks alone do not. Classroom learning goals also provide the specific targets for teaching and learning that improve student achievement.

