



A Teacher's Guide to Standards-Based Learning

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Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *A Teacher's Guide to Standards-Based Learning* by Tammy Heflebower, Jan K. Hoegh, Philip B. Warrick, and Jeff Flygare. *A Teacher's Guide to Standards-Based Learning* explains the theories behind standards-based learning and shows how to transition to and implement standards-based teaching in the classroom.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Planning Instruction With Proficiency Scales

1. Define *priority standards* and *supporting standards* and their significance.
2. What are the most important aspects of proficiency scales, and how should these scales be constructed? Briefly describe each level of the proficiency scale in your explanation.
3. As an educator, what benefits do you see coming from effective utilization of proficiency scales? What role should they play in the classroom?
4. How does a standards-based approach to instruction intersect with the various instructional frameworks available to teachers? What are the primary concerns when integrating a standards-based approach?
5. What important considerations do educators need to make when creating a unit plan? How should an educator sequence standards in a unit, and why is this sequencing beneficial? Please provide an example of how this sequencing should be done.
6. Should an educator utilize a planning template when building unit plans? Why or why not?

7. Explain how teachers can use response to intervention (RTI) to differentiate instruction in a standards-based classroom for students who progress at different levels.

Chapter 2

Instructing With Proficiency Scales

1. In your own words, briefly define *preassessment*. Why would an educator who has implemented standards-based instruction assess students before they have received instruction?
2. What three tasks are most vital to introducing proficiency scales to students? Describe each task and how it should be carried out.
3. Provide an example of how an educator might effectively move from introduction to actual content instruction. What tools might the educator use to smoothly make this transition?
4. What types of lessons are key in developing student proficiency, and what should these lessons include?
5. How must an educator in the standards-based classroom adapt when students require differentiated instruction while developing proficiency?

6. Describe the steps an educator should take once students achieve proficiency. What considerations must the educator make in this situation?

Chapter 3

Setting Goals and Tracking Progress

1. List and explain the four ways in which goal setting helps students learn.
2. When should students set goals, and how often should they do so?
3. Define the *comparative orientation* and *mastery orientation* approaches to goal setting. What are their primary characteristics, and why should a student choose one over the other?
4. What two approaches should educators use to teach goal setting? Please explain both and how teachers can use them together to improve their teaching.
5. What three phases should teachers use to explicitly teach goal setting to students? What are the primary goals of each phase?
6. Why should teachers encourage students to track their progress toward their goals? How do the processes by which students can track their progress individually and as a whole class differ, and why would an educator choose one process or the other?

7. In what ways can teachers celebrate students' success as students work toward their goals? As an educator, how would you celebrate your students' success?

Chapter 4

Administering Quality Classroom Assessments and Figuring Grades

1. Explain obtrusive assessment's attributes and uses and the common item types used in obtrusive assessment.
2. List some examples of unobtrusive assessments. What unobtrusive techniques do you find most valuable, and why is this the case?
3. What are the two most common approaches to student-generated assessment?
4. What issues must teachers have awareness of when they score assessments based on proficiency scales?
5. What important roles do scores, grades, and item response theory (IRT) play in assessment in a standards-based environment?
6. Describe the guidelines educators should follow as they build summative scores for students. Which of these guidelines do you find the most noteworthy, and why?

7. How should an educator respond when a student displays an unusual pattern of performance?

Chapter 5

Teaching Exceptional Students

1. In your own words, define an *exceptional student*. What challenge do exceptional students bring to the classroom?
2. Why should an educator link a system of standards-based learning to a multitiered system of support, and how should an educator do so? What role does the proficiency scale play in this process?
3. In what ways can educators modify and accommodate proficiency scales? Why should educators do this?
4. What kinds of modifications and accommodations are commonly used in differentiated instruction?
5. Provide examples of proficiency scales modified for use with students with disabilities, English learners, and gifted learners. Explain why these specific modifications and accommodations are made in these cases.
6. What guidelines should educators follow when assigning grades to exceptional students?

7. What kinds of challenges may educators face when using standards-based learning in electives, Advanced Placement courses, and International Baccalaureate courses? How should an educator overcome these challenges?

Chapter 6

Communicating Grades

1. Why should educators explain the differences between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced grades to stakeholders? What differences do educators need to communicate?
2. Define *elevator speech*. What role does the elevator speech play in communicating grades in the standards-based classroom?
3. What two methods can teachers use to foster teacher-to-parent communication? Describe both methods and how you would utilize them.
4. What are the key aspects of effectively using report cards in the standards-based classroom?
5. How should educators communicate nonacademic progress in the standards-based classroom? What communication tools are most effective for this purpose?
6. In what ways can educators overcome the hurdle of current technologies and student-management systems in order to effectively communicate standards-based grading?