

Solution Tree | Press

The Authentic Standards-Based Environment: A Systematic Approach to Learning Targets, Assessment, and Data

By Eileen Depka

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *The Authentic Standards-Based Environment: A Systematic Approach to Learning Targets, Assessment, and Data* by Eileen Depka. *The Authentic Standards-Based Environment* provides a framework for understanding standards-based assessments and dives into practical implementation.

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.

Copyright © 2023 by Solution Tree Press

Chapter 1

Unpacking Standards: Why and How

1. What are the three main steps for unpacking a standard? Describe each in your own words.
2. Consider figures 1.10 and 1.11 (pages 19–22). What are some of the differences between unpacking a language arts standard and a mathematics standard? How does this format more clearly indicate essential aspects of standards?
3. How, in the past, have you approached sharing and explaining standards with students?
After reading chapter 1, how do you plan to update this approach?
4. Explain why using words like *relevant* and *pertinent* often require further clarification.
Provide two examples of vocabulary you can substitute in standards to clearly state them in ways students will be able to use.

Chapter 2

Designing Standards-Based Learning Target

1. Define *learning targets* and explain their purpose in the classroom. What are the two types of learning targets, and how do they differ?
2. How does using exact phrasing from the standards in your learning targets aid students in better understanding the targets?
3. What are the three skills students must internalize in order to successfully take ownership of targets?
4. Consider your classroom. Where in your classroom specifically could you post standards so that students could see them and engage with them on an everyday basis?

Chapter 3

Creating Standards-Based Assessments

1. List the three basic steps for designing standards-based assessments and describe each step in your own words.
2. Consider figure 3.3's (page 51) illustration of the vocabulary utilized by Bloom's (1954) taxonomy. Why are action verbs so important for engaging students?
3. What are the four levels of Webb's (2002) Depth of Knowledge? Outline the characteristics of each level. How does Webb's DOK differ from Bloom's taxonomy, and what are some of the advantages of each?
4. Describe the steps for successful comparison between an assessment and its standard. In your classroom, have you ever reused an assessment after determining designing a new match would be less efficient? Briefly recount your experience.

Chapter 4

Creating Standards-Based Rubrics

1. List the three steps for creating a standards-based rubric and then, using the standard in figure 4.1 (page 68), craft your own rubric and then compare it to figure 4.2 (page 69).
2. How can grading with a rubric provide an accurate reflection on the quality of students' work?
3. Consider a time within your classroom that you have utilized a standards-based rubric. How did you go about explaining the role of the rubric and your expectations with your students' work? What was your students' response?
4. Describe one difference between using a rubric for mathematics standards versus English language arts standards. What are specific actions you must associate with each?

Chapter 5

Implementing Common Assessments to Ensure Comparable Data

1. Describe the term *common assessment* in your own words. Why is teacher collaboration so fundamental in creating successful common assessments?
2. List the steps of the process for developing common assessments with your team members. What is the difference between developing common assessments and classroom assessments?
3. What is the relationship between the timeline for an assessment and the likelihood the assessment data is comparable across classrooms? Why is it important for teachers to stay on track with their predetermined timelines?
4. Consider the differences between forming common assessments across a single grade level, as you would in a large school or district, as opposed to a school with single-classroom grade levels. How can vertical teams actively collaborate to successfully generate useful data with their assessments?

Chapter 6

Using Unpacked Standards to Report Data and Create a Scope and Sequence

1. When collecting and reporting data, why is it important to use the mode instead of the average?
2. How can data both reaffirm the goal of common assessments as well as bolster high-performing students' continued growth, instead of causing a plateau?
3. Consider figure 6.9 on page 119. Why is the word *understand* a crucial aspect of the standard for third grade geometry? How does the assessment displayed in figure 6.10 (page 120) gauge students' understanding of the characteristics of shapes?
4. Consider the author's examples of scope-and-sequence documents on pages 127–129. Have you ever utilized an in-depth chart like this for planning your standards? If so, describe one experience with it. If not, what is the first step you would take in order to set up a scope-and-sequence chart for your classroom?

Chapter 7

Implementing the Process School- or Districtwide

1. Consider your school or district. Have you already implemented standards-based learning? If so, who led the implementation initiative, what is your current process and how are you progressing? If not, who would be the folks most likely to lead the change, and what is one step you could take to assist?
2. List five reasons why standards are important for your school or district specifically. How can you summarize these reasons to clearly state them to your students?
3. Why is sharing and tracking progress a vital step in implementing broader standards-based learning in your school or district? How does increased comfort with team members lead to more productive work sessions and collaboration?
4. Imagine you are a school leader about to widely implement the standards-based process. What is the first step you would take in starting your school down the path?