

Tool: Unpacking Essential Standards

Step 1: Annotate the Essential Standard

Instructions: Using a process adapted from the work of Larry Ainsworth (2003) by education leadership consultants Kim Bailey and Chris Jakicic (2019), annotate one of your essential standards in the following box. Begin by circling verbs (skills students should master), then underline nouns (concepts or facts students should master) and put brackets around words that show the context of the task students will perform to demonstrate mastery.

Step 2: Reflect on the Standard

Instructions: Answer the following questions about the essential standard that you annotated in step 1.

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| Using your annotations, list the content knowledge that students will need to know in order to master this standard. | |
| Using your annotations, list the skills that students will need to demonstrate in order to master this standard. | |
| Why is it important for students to master this standard? | |
| How can you assess the progress that students are making toward mastering this standard? | |

Step 3: Write Student-Friendly Learning Targets

Instructions: Create a set of three to five statements describing exactly what students will need to know and be able to do in order to master this standard. Remember to write your learning targets in student-friendly language so that you can effectively communicate your expectations to your students. Also, remember to include a “doing task” that students can complete in order to demonstrate mastery of the learning target.

| Expected Learning | Expected Learning in Student-Friendly Language | Doing Task |
|---|--|--|
| <i>Sample: Students will need to understand that poets often use figurative language to create a mood or tone for their poems.</i> | <i>Sample: I can explain how writers use figurative language to influence readers' interpretations.</i> | <i>Sample: This means that I can look at similes, metaphors, and personification in poems and make a prediction about how they might make readers feel.</i> |
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References

Ainsworth, L. (2003). *“Unwrapping” the standards: A simple process to make standards manageable*. Englewood, CO: Advanced Learning Press.

Bailey, K., & Jakicic, C. (2019). *Make it happen: Coaching with the four critical questions of PLCs at Work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.