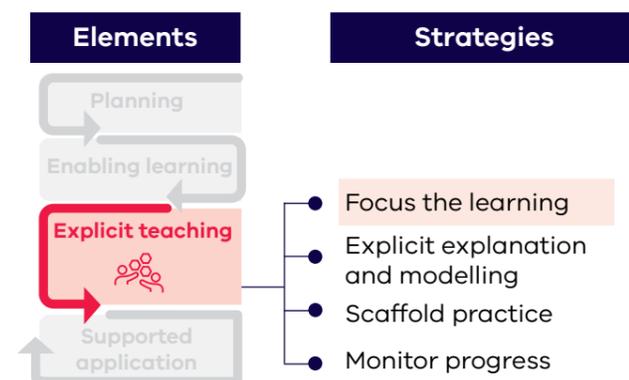




Focus the learning

Learning objectives (LOs), also known as learning intentions, help to focus and guide student learning. LOs reflect the content descriptors and achievement standards in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, and the knowledge and skills in the Victorian Pathways Certificate and VCE pathways. LOs help students understand what they are expected to learn, while success criteria (SC) break down what students need to demonstrate to achieve the LOs. When setting LOs and planning lessons, it is important to consider what prior knowledge students must have to be able to achieve the intended learning.



Key links to other guides

- Collaboratively develop quality curriculum materials

Links to departmental initiatives

- Diverse Learners Hub
- Professional Learning Communities
- Student Excellence Program
- Victorian Lesson Plans

References and further reading: arc.educationapps.vic.gov.au/learning/resource/77150

Practice 1 Use learning objectives and success criteria

State and explain learning objectives and success criteria



Brief, clear and measurable LOs provide students with the key goals of the lesson and help them focus on the key information to be learnt (Black and Wiliam 1998; Perry et al. 2021). SC break down the steps to achieving the goals, helping students know whether they are on track.

HOW?

- State and fully explain the LOs and SC in student-friendly language, defining key vocabulary and checking understanding.
- LOs should use verbs such as compare, predict, solve and describe. E.g. 'We are learning to define and identify nouns and verbs in sentences.'
- Articulate SC as 'I can' actions. E.g. 'I can explain the difference between a noun and a verb' and 'I can circle the nouns and underline the verbs.'
- When using exemplars and worked examples identify how they meet the SC and can be used to self-check work.

Review achievement of learning objectives and success criteria



Reviewing LOs and SC helps to confirm the intended learning has been achieved and reveals gaps in understanding to be addressed in future teaching. It is also an opportunity to highlight links with previous and future learning, which supports the development of more complex mental models. It can support self-regulation by providing a basis for students to actively monitor their progress, reflect on their understanding, and make necessary adjustments to improve (Quigley et al. 2018).

HOW?

- Revisit SC during the lesson to track progress towards the LOs.
- Review the LOs and SC at the end of each lesson to identify if further instruction is required.
- Measure understanding and achievement of SC either verbally or by incorporating strategies such as exit tickets, quick quizzes or questioning.
- Facilitate student reflection on the LOs, identifying steps taken to achieve them. E.g. ask students to write a short reflection on their work, how they met the SCs and what they found challenging.

Practice 2 Activate prior learning and stimulate connections

Activate prior knowledge and facilitate connections



Identifying the prior knowledge required for units and lessons and activating it or explicitly teaching it (when required) assists students to engage with the new learning material (AERO 2023). Using references that are familiar to students supports them to link their existing knowledge with the new material.

HOW?

- Use pre-tests and review activities to identify gaps in prior knowledge to be addressed, and opportunities for extension or compression of content that students have already mastered.
- At the start of the lesson, activate relevant knowledge with retrieval activities such as 'Do Nows', questioning, low-stakes quizzes or peer-explanation.
- Explicitly illustrate the connections between prior knowledge and the LOs. E.g. 'Last week we learnt to say and record number quantities to 20. Today we will use this knowledge to estimate and represent collections without counting all.'
- Relate new concepts and skills to everyday experiences initially to engage students and strengthen retention. E.g. by identifying persuasive writing techniques in a popular advertisement.

Use advance organisers



Advance organisers (which can be graphic, expository, narrative and skimming) show students the connections between their existing knowledge and new knowledge to be covered in the lesson or learning sequence (Marzano et al. 2001; Kirschner and Hendrick 2020). This presents the big picture and sets the scene for learning, prompting the activation of prior knowledge and preparing students to assimilate new information. They are not summaries but rather an overview of the material to be taught (Cottingham 2023).

HOW?

- Identify key ideas from the upcoming topic and arrange them logically to highlight connections between prior learning and the content that will be covered.
- Present students with the organiser at the beginning of a lesson or learning sequence to prime them for the coming learning.
- Use the organiser as you introduce each new idea or concept, referring to it as the topic progresses to help consolidate students' mental models.
- Advance graphic organisers provide visual representations of connections that convey meaning, and can be returned to throughout a unit.
- Expository, narrative and skimming organisers are often delivered verbally, however their effectiveness can be enhanced when also represented graphically.

