

Title: Whiteboard Animation: The Basics on Building Blocks

Speaker: Glory Tobiason

Glory: So far in this module, we have focused on learning goals and success criteria.

But as you can see in the feedback loop, learning goals and success criteria are derived from building blocks. This lesson focuses on building blocks.

Planning for standards-based instruction and formative assessment means starting with the end goal in mind. College and Career Ready Standards specify what students should know and be able to do at the end of each grade level – they're the target everyone's aiming for.

Good planning also involves thinking about where students are starting from, in order to solidify and build on that prior learning.

College and Career Ready Standards specify what students should know and be able to do at the end of the year, but they don't characterize in any detail how student learning progresses from one standard to another.

The standards are substantive and the quantity of learning they describe is too large for students to handle all at once, too large for planning daily lessons, and too large for formative assessment.

So in order to plan instruction and formative assessment, teachers need to describe the intermediate steps that lead from achievement of one standard to the next. These steps are called Building Blocks. They're the incremental changes that occur in students' thinking or skills, as they progress in learning from one standard to the next.

Teachers identify Building Blocks by asking, "What are the incremental learning steps that students need to take on the pathway to achieving this Standard?" and "What are the learnable, lesson-sized 'chunks' of this Standard?"

It's important to remember that Building Blocks *build* on each other. They're not like items in a list that you can check off and move past. Each block is the foundational learning for the next block, and together, they accumulate into the standard. If a block were checked off and disregarded, the subsequent learning wouldn't have a solid foundation.

For a given Building Block, some students will have outside learning or experiences that make the block easier to navigate. Other students might bring misconceptions that will make the block more challenging. Some students will benefit from more time on certain blocks than others.

The progression of Building Blocks that orients lesson design and formative assessment is critical as teachers manage all the individual needs of their students. It's like a roadmap that everyone's using. Students might be at different places on the pathway, but they're all headed towards the same goal – the target standard – and with adequate support, they'll all meet at the top.