

## WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

This book is an outstanding resource that makes John Hattie's research on learning intentions and success criteria both accessible and practical for educators. Fisher and Frey provide a clear, engaging framework that will help teachers create purposeful learning environments where students thrive. It is a must-have for schools committed to clarity, equity, and impact.

**Christopher Robinson**

Principal, Oakton Elementary School in Evanston, Illinois

Clarity was the missing piece that we had been searching for in pursuit of student success. Our teachers are now able to successfully make learning visible to all students by creating clear learning intentions and success criteria. *Teacher Clarity* has united us as a team to ensure that learning is not only taking place but is visible to all.

**Mendy Felton**

Academic Administrator, Arkansas Virtual Academy

Teacher Clarity has strengthened our focus on purposeful instruction and transformed the way we teach and learn at Pea Ridge Primary. It has created a shared understanding of learning goals and success criteria for both teachers and students, leading to deeper engagement and greater success. *The Illustrated Guide to Teacher Clarity* is an easy-to-use resource for creating and maintaining that shared understanding.

**Darah Bennett**

Principal, Pea Ridge Primary School



THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO  
**TEACHER  
CLARITY**



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**TEACHER  
CLARITY**

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**CORWIN**  
Fisher & Frey

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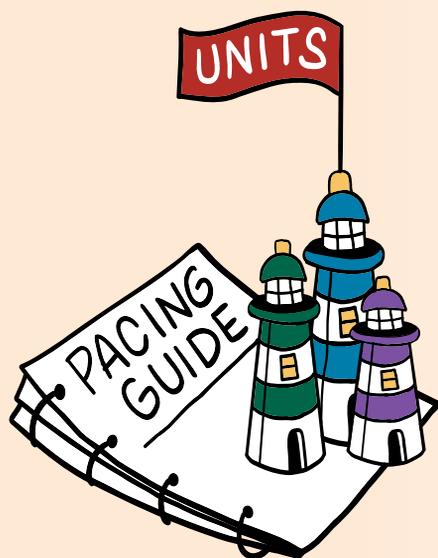
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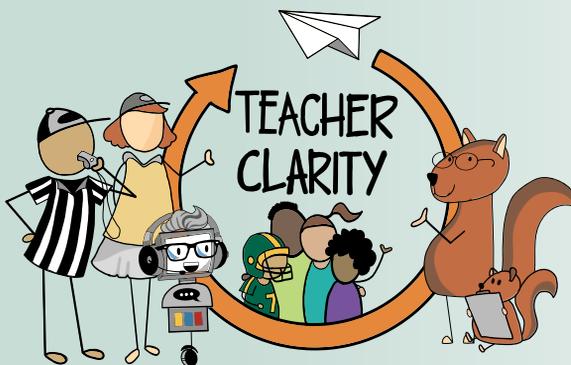
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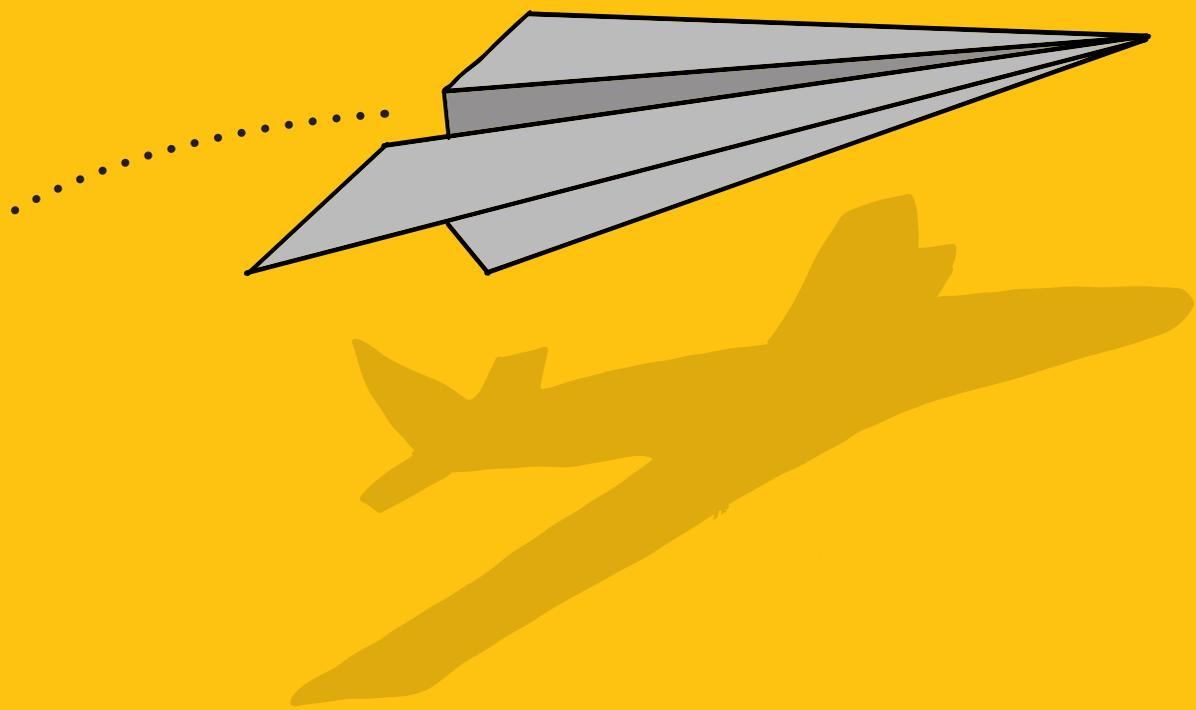
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Visit the companion website at  
<https://companion.corwin.com/courses/TeacherClarity>  
 for downloadable resources.



*Beginning with the end in mind is generally good advice for educators. Teachers need to know where they want to go with students so that they can design plans to get there. It's like traveling to a new destination and each lesson has the potential to contribute to students' knowledge and skills.*

*When teachers and students know the desired outcomes, the likelihood of success increases. On a daily basis, the outcome is the learning intention. There may be several success criteria required to accomplish the learning intention. At the unit level, the outcomes are the unit goals. By the end of the school year, the outcome is proficiency on grade-level standards. Each lesson and each unit contribute to students' overall proficiency on the standards.*

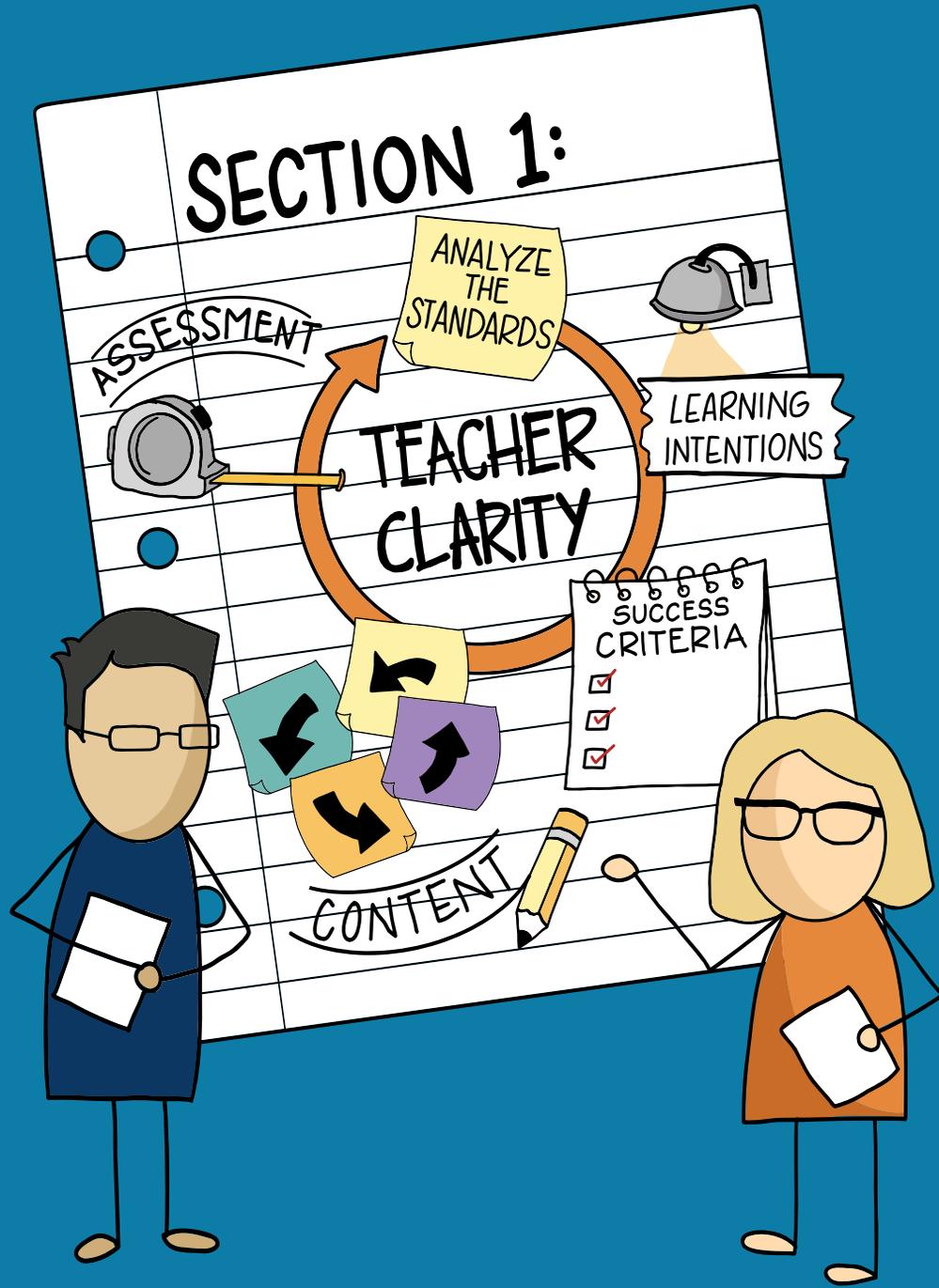
*So, what is the end that teachers need to keep in mind? The standards. The publicly articulated set of expectations for what students need to know and be able to do in each grade level and content area. To reach that end, each lesson must contribute to students' developing proficiency.*

*But standards are not just what teachers keep in mind at the end. Educators do plan backward, but the starting point is also the standards. Analyzing standards to identify the concepts and skills contained within them is an important part of the process of backward design.*

*This process, beginning and ending with the expectations for students' performance, is teacher clarity. Remember, clarity is determined by students, not teachers. Thus, part of clarity is ensuring that students understand what they are learning, and what successful learning looks like, each day.*

**VIDEO 0.1:** Doug and Nancy introducing teacher clarity  
[qrs.ly/skgtxqv](https://qrs.ly/skgtxqv)





# Section 1:

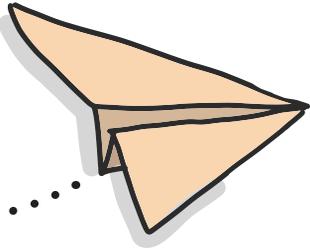
## WHAT IS TEACHER CLARITY?

Teacher clarity is a critical factor in students' learning. And it's been around for a long time.<sup>1</sup> The components of teacher clarity include the following:<sup>2</sup>

- 1 The clarity of the **presentation** is apparent to the students.
- 2 The **points** the teacher makes are clear and easy to understand.
- 3 The teacher **explains concepts clearly** and answers questions intelligently.
- 4 The lesson is **organized**.

*These components seem very reasonable and logical. But the **what** is missing. What are we presenting about? What points are we making? What concepts do we explain? Without clear learning goals, the answers to these questions could differ widely across classrooms.*

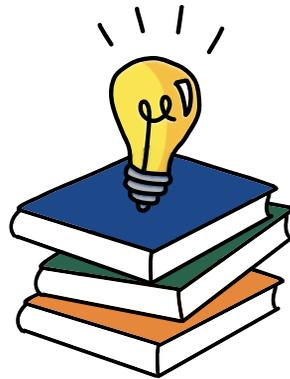




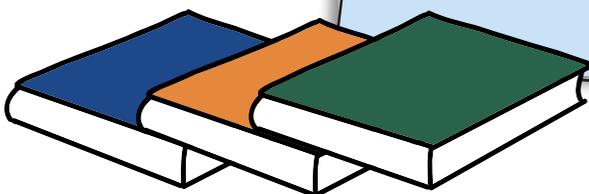
Several researchers have explored the concept of teacher clarity.

**Which of the follow quotes from their work resonate with you?**

“A cluster of teaching behaviors that result in learners gaining knowledge or understanding of a topic.”<sup>3</sup>



“Clarity, then, is the teacher’s ability to present knowledge in a way that students can understand.”<sup>4</sup>



“A state in which a teacher who is in command of the subject matter to be transmitted is able to do that which is required to communicate with learners successfully.”<sup>5</sup>

“Making content clear and accessible to students.”<sup>6</sup>

*I like the idea of learners gaining knowledge and making sure that students can understand. Also, the simplicity of making content clear and accessible resonates with me.*



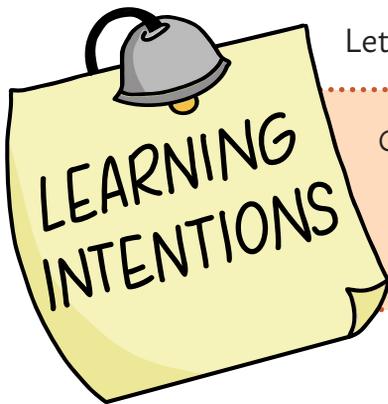
**VIDEO 1.1:** A teacher introducing learning intentions and success criteria  
[qrs.ly/6hgtxqy](https://qrs.ly/6hgtxqy)





Our working definition of the term *teacher clarity* is this:

**Teacher clarity refers to a teacher’s ability to clearly and consistently communicate learning intentions, success criteria, and design instructional processes that makes learning visible, intentional, and understandable for students.**



Let’s flesh this out further:

Clarity begins with **clearly defined learning intentions** that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of a lesson.

Learning intentions are paired with **success criteria**, which describe what proficiency looks like and help students monitor their own progress.



**Clear organization of content**—through logically sequenced lessons, consistent routines, and explicit connections between ideas—further supports understanding by reducing cognitive overload.

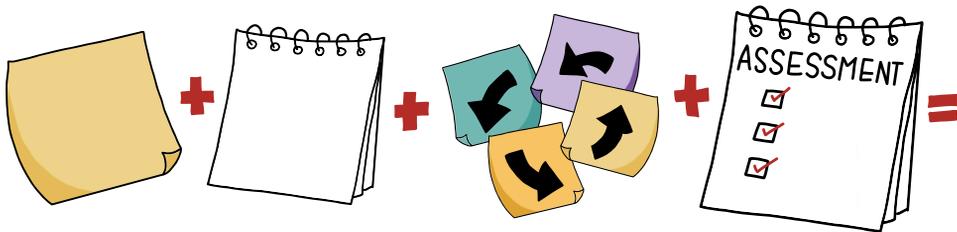
**Assessment** plays a key role in teacher clarity, as evidence is collected and used to check for understanding and provide timely feedback aligned with the learning goals.



Teachers enhance clarity by providing **examples, modeling, and think-alouds that make abstract concepts concrete** and show students how to practice and apply what they are learning.



# IMPACT!



**When these elements work together, students are more engaged, self-directed, and confident in their learning. And they learn more.**

*In other words, teacher clarity is not one more thing. It's **the** thing!*

*Teacher clarity is the design and delivery of learning experiences that make an impact.*



**VIDEO 1.2:** Teachers talking about the value of teacher clarity  
[qrs.ly/ipgtxr7](https://qrs.ly/ipgtxr7)



