

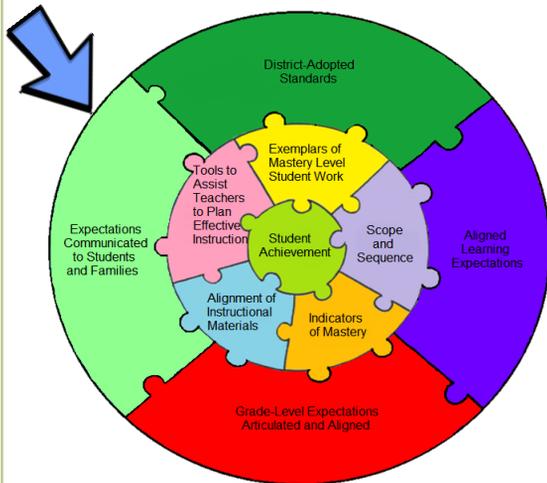
Critical Question #1

What do students need to know, understand, and be able to do? (Plan)

What do leaders need to know and be able to do?

Fundamental Practice 9. Standards and grade-level expectations are communicated effectively to student and families.

Students and families should understand what students are expected to learn and how mastery is demonstrated. Particularly, students need to understand and be able to describe both the concepts and skills they are expected to learn for their grade level and/or content area as well as what and how they are expected to perform. To be fully engaged in learning, students need to (1) know what they are learning, (2) be able to understand the purpose and rationale for what they are learning, (3) make connections to prior learning, daily life, higher education, the adult world, and careers, and (4) know how they are expected to demonstrate mastery. As stated previously, this means that students must have adequate descriptions and examples of mastery-level performance for the concepts and skills they are expected to learn and that parents understand the learning and performance expectations for their child.



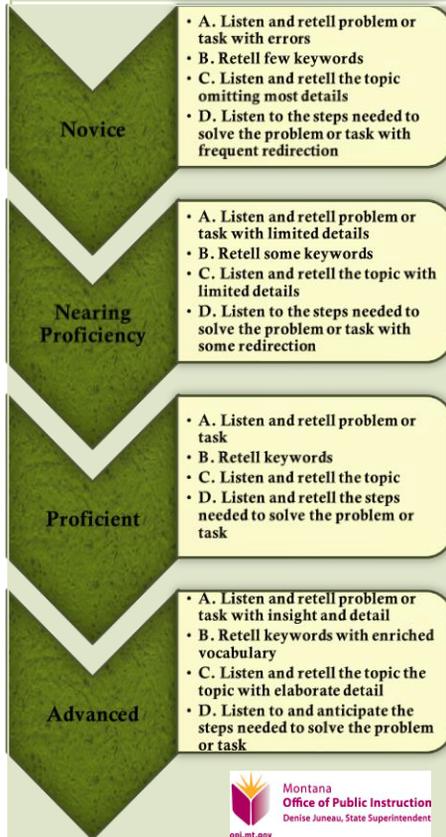
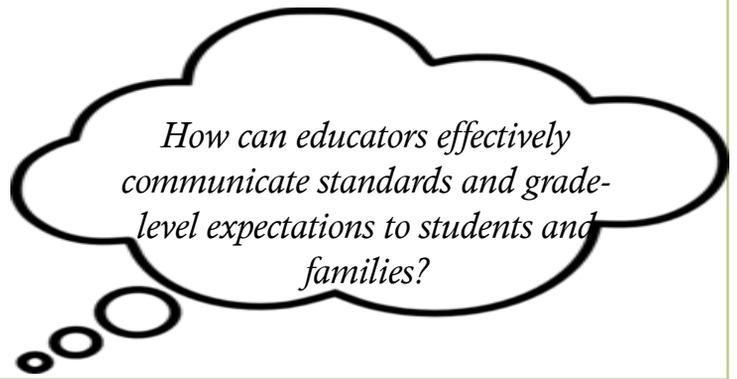
Guiding Questions:

- How do schools ensure students and parents understand what students are expected to learn?
- How can the school ensure students know what mastery looks like in all expected concepts and skills?
- What opportunities are provided for students to make connections of their learning to prior learning, higher education, and careers?

Reflections:

1. As a leader, what is my role in ensuring this fundamental practice is taking place in my district and schools?
2. What are current barriers that are getting in the way of successfully implementing this fundamental practice systemically in my district and schools?
3. When I return to my district/school, I will complete the following three action steps to begin enhancing our (my and my staff's) application of this fundamental practice:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____



When conveying information to parents regarding student mastery of standards, Ruby Payne (2006) declares parents essentially want to know how their child is performing and if they are meeting grade level expectations. By determining the behaviors necessary to master standards, educators at any level can convey the information thoroughly to describe where the students are performing in relation to the goal. In order to do this effectively, they should consider how to communicate standards to students and parents so they are easily understood, what they need to know, and how to describe demonstration of performance levels.

One way to achieve this effectively is to provide a rubric, similar to ones utilized in classrooms, with the embedded standard(s) conveyed through student friendly language. This provides parents a clear understanding of where their child is performing, ongoing progress, and expected mastery level. Moreover, rubrics clearly define the continuum of performance and can assist with communicating growth and development. Here, not only are rubrics used within the class, but can be utilized for parent communication, conferences, meetings, designing differentiated instruction and providing specific student feedback.

When determining mastery levels, consider several guidelines to communicate performance standards such as:

- Share only essential information
- Describe the level of performance to include the learning objectives
- Provide connected mastery of standards and goals for learning
- Create a learning progression in relationship to the level of performance
- Include specific examples
- Include pre-assessment performance and current level to describe growth

Furthermore, rubrics, when utilized as a communication tool, can be created to accommodate the needs of English language learners, students with disabilities, struggling students and higher achieving students as well. Additionally, they can be crafted in other languages, or available electronically, so they can easily be understood by all stakeholders.

Payne, R. K. (2006, Winter). Effectively Communicating Standards to Parents. Leadership Compass. Retrieved March 08, 2017, from https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Leadership_Compass/2006/LC2006v4n2a4.pdf

Try This:

- ✓ **Connect the assignment to the learning objective** by pausing instruction to ask students to explain the connection to a particular task.
- ✓ **Review essential objectives and discuss how best to assist students** with reaching them. Then **adjust the lesson** to reflect the outcomes of the conversation.
- ✓ **Explain how students will use what they're learning.** To understand the relevancy of the activity, explicitly connect prior to new learning. If you cannot explain how they will use what they are learning, question whether or not they really need to learn it.
- ✓ At the beginning of a unit, **send parents an e-mail or letter home** explaining the learning goals and how they can track their child's progress towards mastery.
- ✓ Assist students with taking ownership over achieving goals by having them **chart their own progress towards mastery of the learning goals.** Have students chart pre-assessment results on graph paper and set goals for end of unit scores. After each formative assessment, have students chart results and discuss progress. Provide specific feedback to assist with achieving goals.

Adapted from Jackson, R.R. (2009). Chapter 2/ Know Where Your Students Are Going. In Never work harder than your students & other principles of great teaching. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Connect to Resources

For additional resources on curriculum development, visit the fundamental practice #1 section of the toolkit.