

Learning Intentions - Part 1

Hi, I'm Martin Tremblay and I'm happy to walk you through this module on learning intentions.

Think about it, everything we teach is guided by an intention...

Intentions can be like modifying a behaviour, or to have our students learn new knowledge, or understand a concept or develop a new competency.

For ESL teachers, the roots of our intentions are found in our program.

These are the long-term goals we want our students to achieve.

These intentions are the driving force behind our Learning and Evaluation Situations.

We reach those goals by structuring our lessons around smaller, more specific learning intentions.

That means there are intentions for every cycle, for every unit, and for every lesson.

Learning intentions describe what we want students to learn. And the reason for learning it.

Contextualized ESL intentions refer to what students will need linguistically to better navigate the world at their age.

What = represents the content that concerns the language and the development of competencies -like the functional language needed to interrupt politely during an interaction, for example.

Why = represents the real-world reason for which students should be learning this content at this level. For example, learning how to politely interrupt someone can avoid conflicts and better reception of our message.

Our intentions are most often contextualized by the broad areas of learning found in our program.

Knowing that students come to school to learn, means that our intentions are not to pass tests.

However, we do evaluate the meeting of learning intentions through success criteria and student reflections

To put it simply, you can look at your lessons or entire LES through these 3 questions:

What will the students learn?

Why do they need to learn this?

Which success criteria will let the students know they successfully met the intention?

Once you have your answers, formulate your learning intention that you can communicate to your students in a language they will understand.

Let's take a look at some examples:

First, a project where students need to draw a map, give directions to other students.

Well the What of the intention here could be: prepositions and directions

The Why could be: Understanding directions allows us to find our way or stay on path.

A possible lesson intention communicated to students: Today, we will learn that giving and understanding directions help us go where we need to go.

Let's take a project in secondary 5 where students need to commemorate an inspiring person.

The What here could be: To study the biography genre.

The Why may be: I want my students to be inspired by people with great achievements.

Possible project intentions communicated to students could be something like: We will learn how to compose a recognition for an inspiring person.

However, technology adds another question into the mix:

Which available technological tools will enhance or add value to this learning?

Continue this module to find out how.