

# Tearing down the wallpaper – sharing learning intentions in a meaningful way

## Introduction

Learning intentions or objectives are too often used in classrooms in a ‘tokenistic’ way, referred to as “wallpaper objectives”, where they are shared and displayed, but not utilised to benefit learning.

## The Problem

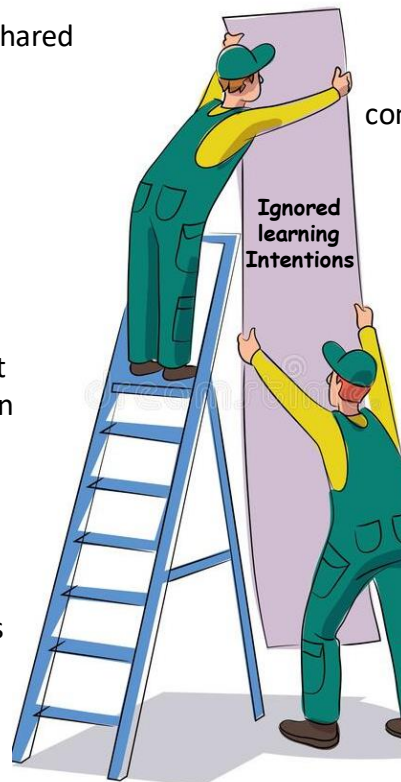
Displaying and ignoring learning intentions not only wastes time but overlooks their potential and misses the benefits of formative assessment. Literature emphasises the importance of sharing learning intentions and success criteria to reduce the achievement gap and yet many classroom practices still do not make it clear what learners are aiming for and how they will know when they are there. “Ensuring that all students know what quality work looks like has a profound impact on achievement” (Wiliam, D 2018, p61). **Imagine being asked to make a cake with no recipe, instructions, or picture of how it should look** (Clarke, S 2021).

## Key findings - Experiences before intervention:

**“They really help when looking for something in my notes.”** - Learners use learning intentions as a contents list.

**“I have never really understood why we are required to, as no one ever uses them”** - Tutors share learning intentions out of obligation.

**“I do not see the point as we just copy them down and do nothing with them.”** - Learners rarely make connections between learning intentions and progressing learning.



## Methodology

Learners and teachers shared their experiences of learning intentions in the classroom through semi-structured interviews. An intervention was then implemented and monitored over several weeks. The intervention worked by combining the sharing of learning intentions, with co-constructing success criteria and self-evaluation and utilised them throughout teaching sessions. Further interviews gathered information on learner experiences of the intervention being used.

## Key Literature & References

- Assessment Reform Group (1999). *Assessment for learning: beyond the black box*. Cambridge. University of Cambridge School of Education.
- Clarke, S (2021). *Unlocking Learning Intentions and Success Criteria*. London. Sage Publications.
- Wiliam, D (2018). *Embedded Formative Assessment 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Bloomington. Solution Tree Press.

## Key findings - Experiences after intervention:

**“We know what the teachers is looking for.”** - Learners highlighted that the intervention helped clarify what they were aiming for.

**“I come away knowing I have achieved.”** - Learners felt clear about their progress which developed confidence.

**“Teachers care whether we have learnt what we were meant to.”** - Learners connected the use of evaluation to their teachers' interest in the status of their learning.

**The key is not how they are shared, but how they are used.**