

TYPES OF LEARNING TARGETS

One way you will know that your targets are clear and usable is if you can determine what kind of learning is being called for. The accuracy of the assessments you develop will depend in part on your ability to classify learning targets in any written curriculum in a way that helps ensure a dependable assessment. We offer a categorization framework that identifies five kinds of learning targets: knowledge, reasoning, skill, product, and disposition, summarized in Figure 3.2.

Classifying learning targets is a necessary step in planning an assessment. It helps identify the assessment options appropriate to each target.

Our purpose in categorizing learning targets is threefold. First, the process will be useful when examining the targets in your own curriculum to determine if they are clear enough. Second, if you need to deconstruct a content standard into smaller teachable parts, knowing the target type will help with identifying the enabling learning targets. Third, it is essential knowledge for selecting the appropriate assessment method, which is explained in Chapter 4.

Knowledge Targets

Knowledge targets include the factual information, procedural knowledge, and conceptual understandings that underpin each academic discipline. They are important because they form the foundation for each of the other types of targets—there is no

FIGURE 3.2 Learning Target Types

Knowledge Targets

Knowledge targets represent the factual information, procedural knowledge, and conceptual understandings that underpin each discipline.

Reasoning Targets

Reasoning targets specify thought processes students are to learn to do well within a range of subjects.

Skill Targets

Skill targets are those where a demonstration or physical skill-based performance is at the heart of the learning.

Product Targets

Product targets describe learning in terms of artifacts where creation of a product is the focus of the learning target. With product targets, the specifications for quality of the product itself are the focus of teaching and assessment.

Disposition Targets

Disposition targets refer to attitudes, motivations, and interests that affect students' approaches to learning. They represent important *affective* goals we hold for students as a byproduct of their educational experience.