

THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

A GUIDE FOR REFLECTION, OBSERVATION, AND CONVERSATION

A photograph of two women, likely teachers, standing and looking at a document together. The woman on the left is wearing a floral patterned top, and the woman on the right is wearing a polka-dot dress and glasses.

DOMAIN 1

PLANNING AND
PREPARATION

A photograph of a teacher smiling and raising her arms in celebration, surrounded by students who are also smiling and raising their hands.

DOMAIN 2

LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS



THE
DANIELSON
GROUP

A photograph of a male teacher and a female student looking at a tablet together. The teacher is on the left, and the student is on the right, wearing glasses.

DOMAIN 4

PRINCIPLED
TEACHING

A photograph of four students in a science laboratory setting, wearing safety goggles and working with glassware and equipment on a lab bench.

DOMAIN 3

LEARNING
EXPERIENCES

DOMAIN 1

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- 1a Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
- 1b Knowing and Valuing Students
- 1c Setting Instructional Outcomes
- 1d Using Resources Effectively
- 1e Planning Coherent Instruction
- 1f Designing and Analyzing Assessments

DOMAIN 2

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- 2a Cultivating Respectful and Affirming Environments
- 2b Fostering a Culture for Learning
- 2c Maintaining Purposeful Environments
- 2d Supporting Positive Student Behavior
- 2e Organizing Spaces for Learning



THE
DANIELSON
GROUP

DOMAIN 4

PRINCIPLED TEACHING

- 4a Engaging in Reflective Practice
- 4b Documenting Student Progress
- 4c Engaging Families and Communities
- 4d Contributing to School Community and Culture
- 4e Growing and Developing Professionally
- 4f Acting in Service of Students

DOMAIN 3

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- 3a Communicating About Purpose and Content
- 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- 3c Engaging Students in Learning
- 3d Using Assessment for Learning
- 3e Responding Flexibly to Student Needs

DOMAIN 1

PLANNING & PREPARATION

DOMAIN 1

PLANNING & PREPARATION

The components in Domain 1: Planning & Preparation describe how teachers organize instruction for student learning. It is difficult to overstate the importance of planning and preparation. One could argue that a teacher's role is not so much to teach as it is to arrange for learning. That is, a teacher's essential responsibility is to prepare for learning activities such that students learn important content and develop skills, mindsets, and habits to be successful in school and beyond.

Planning and preparation involves understanding the curriculum and knowing the students in order to adapt to meet their individual needs. In some cases, teachers must take on significant responsibility for the design of learning experiences, either creating lessons and units from scratch or building from materials and resources they find. Ideally though, teachers have access to high-quality resources and instructional materials that have been designed by curriculum experts and provide a solid foundation and jumping off point for planning and preparation.

DOMAIN 1 COMPONENTS

- 1a Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
- 1b Knowing and Valuing Students
- 1c Setting Instructional Outcomes
- 1d Using Resources Effectively
- 1e Planning Coherent Instruction
- 1f Designing and Analyzing Assessments



The work of preparing to teach a lesson or unit is at the core of professional planning and preparation. Though teachers may ultimately deliver instruction alone, their planning and preparation is always enhanced by collaboration with colleagues. Furthermore, thorough preparation considers students' academic, social, and emotional needs and development, as well as their contexts, and it is grounded in a strong, culturally responsive curriculum. Even the best materials require more than following a script or carrying out other people's instructional designs. Teachers must themselves intellectually engage with the curriculum, demonstrating qualities of critical judgment and discernment, to understand its features and design and make thoughtful adjustments for the students in front of them – who change from year to year and period to period.

Teachers who excel in Domain 1: Planning & Preparation organize instruction that reflects an understanding of the disciplines they teach—the important concepts and principles within that content, and how the different elements relate to one another and to those in other disciplines. They understand their students—what they know and are able to do within the discipline, as well as their race, culture, ethnicity, background, and interests. They prepare for instruction that sets high expectations for every student, includes sound assessment methods, and expertly structures lessons to support all students' engagement with content. Importantly, they also consider the why of their disciplines, helping students grapple with big questions and relate their learning to their own purpose in life.



	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
1a Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy	The teacher lacks sufficient knowledge of content and pedagogy to support student learning of the content.	The teacher's understanding of content and pedagogy partially supports student learning of the content.	The teacher's understanding of content and pedagogy supports student learning of the content.	The teacher's understanding of content and pedagogy fosters deeper learning, student agency, and intellectual dispositions such as curiosity, reasoning, and reflection.
1b Knowing and Valuing Students	The teacher lacks sufficient knowledge of students to support student learning or development.	The teacher's knowledge of students' identities, as well as their strengths and needs, partially supports learning and development.	The teacher's knowledge of students supports learning and development, and enables the teacher to build upon student assets.	The teacher's knowledge of students is extensive and fosters student learning and development to support academic and personal success.
1c Setting Instructional Outcomes	Instructional outcomes are not identified, are not rigorous, or are inappropriate.	Instructional outcomes are moderately rigorous and are appropriate for most students in the class.	Instructional outcomes are rigorous and appropriate for students.	Instructional outcomes represent high-level learning of important content and support student autonomy, curiosity, and intellectual risk-taking.
1d Using Resources Effectively	The teacher is not aware of, or does not appropriately or effectively use, instructional materials and other resources to support student learning and development.	The teacher understands and uses instructional materials and other resources to support student learning and development, but these resources represent only a narrow band of what is available.	The teacher's knowledge of instructional materials and other resources leads to discerning choices to support student learning and development.	The teacher makes deliberate decisions in the use of instructional materials and other resources to meet individual student needs and support student autonomy and intellectual engagement.
1e Planning Coherent Instruction	The design of learning experiences does not support student engagement with important content.	Learning experiences are somewhat coherent in structure, within and across lessons, partially supporting students to meet the intended outcomes.	Learning experiences are challenging and engaging; they are designed to meet the needs of students in the class.	Learning experiences prioritize the needs of individual students, ensure all students can meet the intended outcomes, and support student assumption of responsibility for learning.
1f Designing and Analyzing Assessments	There is no plan for assessment, or the assessments will not provide evidence that students have learned the intended outcomes.	Assessments will partially help the teacher know that students have learned or are learning the intended outcomes.	Assessments are planned throughout the instructional process and provide timely and valuable information to teachers and students.	Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content and analyze their own progress through multiple, flexible assessments.

1a APPLYING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY

As they prepare for and guide student learning, accomplished teachers demonstrate disciplinary expertise—command of the content and curriculum they teach. They understand the internal relationships within disciplines, knowing which concepts and skills are central, peripheral, and prerequisite to the understanding of others. Their knowledge includes awareness of typical student misconceptions and how to leverage or dispel them. Teachers must also be familiar with the particular pedagogical approaches best suited to each discipline and choose which is the most suitable in different learning contexts to advance student understanding. Strong instructional materials and curricular resources can be a significant support to teachers in this area. When the curriculum is designed by experts and those selecting it have assured that the content is accurate and reflects high standards of pedagogy, the curriculum itself can provide an opportunity for teachers to continue developing their knowledge of content and pedagogy.

The term “content” includes, of course, far more than factual information or skills, and mastery of particular content, while a central goal for students, is not the only goal. When teachers apply their knowledge of interdisciplinary relationships, they support students’ transfer of knowledge and skills in a wide variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. By understanding how the content to be learned and methods of inquiry specific to that discipline may vary from different cultural points of view and can be informed by multiple ways of knowing, teachers further support student understanding and mindsets for learning. This type of understanding is key to making the content accessible to students and guiding their learning of specific concepts, but it goes beyond that. Teachers who deeply understand content and pedagogy know which approaches, concepts, and lines of inquiry are likely to interest students. Student interest then yields greater understanding and potentially inspires a sense of purpose that can help them succeed in the classroom and beyond.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Disciplinary Expertise

Teachers have deep knowledge of the disciplines they teach, including structures, central concepts and skills, prerequisite relationships, and methods of inquiry.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Teachers make content accessible to students by understanding and addressing preconceptions, presenting ideas in comprehensible and powerful ways, and thoughtfully implementing the most effective pedagogical approaches.

Knowledge of Interdisciplinary Relationships and Skills

Teachers make interdisciplinary connections to scaffold learning, support engagement, and build essential knowledge and skills that cross disciplines and support student learning in multiple contexts.

Considerations

- How do teachers’ plans and presentations of content reflect understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts within the discipline?
- What are some ways teachers present content and utilize discipline-specific learning strategies to support deeper understanding?
- In what ways do teachers help students make connections between disciplines or develop cross-disciplinary skills?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher lacks sufficient knowledge of content and pedagogy to support student learning of the content.	The teachers' understanding of content and pedagogy partially supports student learning of the content.	The teachers' understanding of content and pedagogy supports student learning of the content.	The teachers' understanding of content and pedagogy fosters deeper learning, student agency, and intellectual dispositions such as curiosity, reasoning, and reflection.
Disciplinary Expertise			
<i>Planning and preparation include content errors or demonstrate a lack of understanding of the content.</i>	<i>Planning and preparation indicate partial understanding of the central concepts of the discipline and their relationship to one another.</i>	<i>Planning and preparation reflect solid understanding of content and the structure of the discipline being taught.</i>	<i>Planning and preparation reflect extensive knowledge of important concepts and how they relate to one another, as well as recent developments in the discipline.</i>
Pedagogical Content Knowledge			
<i>Lesson and unit plans lack consideration for prerequisite knowledge and possible student misconceptions.</i>	<i>Lesson and unit plans include instructional strategies and representations of content that are partially suitable and show some consideration for prerequisite knowledge important to student learning of the content.</i>	<i>Lesson and unit plans include a variety of strategies and representations of content appropriate to the discipline, use a range of pedagogical approaches, and demonstrate understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts.</i>	<i>In lessons and units planned or adapted, instructional strategies and representations of content are chosen wisely and explicitly for their suitability to the content and their ability to foster high-levels of intellectual engagement, skill development, and critical thinking.</i>
Knowledge of Interdisciplinary Relationships and Skills			
<i>No interdisciplinary relationships are identified in plans or preparation.</i>	<i>Plans and preparation cite some relevant connections to concepts in other disciplines and to skills that transfer across disciplines.</i>	<i>Plans and preparation demonstrate knowledge of interdisciplinary relationships and skills and their real-world application.</i>	<i>Lessons and units planned or adapted focus on connecting concepts to other disciplines, prioritizing skills that transfer across disciplines and emphasizing real-world applications of these concepts and skills.</i>

1b KNOWING AND VALUING STUDENTS

To maximize learning, teachers must be able to make the curriculum accessible to each and every learner. Successful teachers are consistently guided by who their students are and who they hope to become, which means they understand, honor, and leverage students' intersecting identities—including their racial, cultural, religious, and gender identities, among others. They support student success by affirming the dignity of students and their lived experiences. Teachers must also develop understanding of students' current knowledge and skills in order to plan successful learning experiences. However, teachers' knowledge of students must extend beyond understanding their familiarity with content or their academic skills to include their social, emotional, and personality strengths. While there are patterns in human development for different age groups, students learn in individual ways and bring varied experiences and identities to learning. Teachers must also rely on their knowledge of students when they apply their understanding of the learning process and learning differences when planning and preparing.

Teachers need to spend significant time and effort throughout the year learning about their students, their lives outside of school, their wellbeing, and other assets and needs in relation to learning and development. Successful teachers value the fact that students come to school with a wealth of knowledge, experience, and skills. Students' experiences outside of formal education (with family and friends, through faith communities, in their jobs and activities) build knowledge, encourage curiosity, and communicate shared norms and values, including mindsets about learning. It is essential that teachers value and partner with students' families and communities. Doing so allows them to leverage the assets students bring from their out-of-school lives to the in-school learning experience in pursuit of academic and personal development that ultimately contribute to individual and societal flourishing.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Respect for Students' Identities

Students' lived experiences and funds of knowledge are the foundation for the development of identity, purpose, intellect, and character.

Understanding of Students' Current Knowledge and Skills

Learning experiences reflect what students bring and are designed with their current knowledge and skills in mind.

Knowledge of Whole Child Development

Students' cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development are all addressed in the design of learning environments and experiences to promote student success and autonomy.

Knowledge of the Learning Process and Learning Differences

Learning requires active intellectual engagement and appropriate support aligned to students' individual differences and needs.

Considerations

- In what ways are students' identities and cultures incorporated and reflected in learning experiences and environments?
- How do teachers use their understanding of students' prior knowledge and experience to support individual learning?
- How are students' academic, social, and emotional assets leveraged to promote student success?
- In what ways are teachers' knowledge of the learning process and learning differences reflected in planning and preparation?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher lacks sufficient knowledge of students to support student learning or development.	The teacher's knowledge of students' identities, as well as their strengths and needs partially supports learning and development.	The teacher's knowledge of students supports learning and development, and enables the teacher to build upon student assets.	The teacher's knowledge of students is extensive and fosters student learning and development to support academic and personal success.
Respect for Students' Identities			
The teacher is not aware of or pays little attention to students' race, culture, or identity.	The teacher applies knowledge of students' race, culture, and identities to planning and preparation with limited success.	The teacher successfully incorporates knowledge of students' race, culture, and identities into planning and preparation.	The teacher recognizes and appreciates students' race, culture, and unique identities, designing culturally responsive and affirming learning experiences with them in mind.
Understanding of Students' Current Knowledge and Skills			
The teacher does not try to ascertain information about students' varied prior knowledge, skills, or mindsets.	The teacher's understanding of students' varied knowledge and skill levels, as well as mindsets related to learning, is applied with limited success.	The teacher's understanding of students' levels of knowledge and skill, as well as their mindsets about learning, is applied successfully in planning and preparation.	The teacher's deep understanding of each student's knowledge, skills, and mindsets ensures that students receive appropriate scaffolds when necessary, meet rigorous outcomes, and are challenged to do their best work.
Knowledge of Whole Child Development			
The teacher does not attend to or have understanding of students' cognitive, social, emotional, and character development.	The teacher's understanding of students' cognitive, social, emotional, and character development is addressed in planning and preparation with limited success.	The teacher's understanding of students' cognitive, social, emotional, and character development is successfully incorporated into planning and preparation.	The teacher deeply understands and integrates students' cognitive, social, emotional, and character development to model and teach habits and mindsets that promote student assumption of responsibility.
Knowledge of the Learning Process and Learning Differences			
The teacher displays insufficient understanding of how students learn and develop in general or of individual differences for students in the class.	The teacher has limited understanding of the learning process and of individual learning differences.	The teacher's accurate understanding of how students learn and learn differently is evident in planning and preparation.	In lessons planned or adapted, the teacher uses extensive knowledge of the learning process and learning differences to design experiences that are engaging and successful.

1c SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

Teaching is a purposeful activity; even the most imaginative activities are directed toward desired learning. Therefore, setting instructional outcomes entails understanding and specifying exactly what students will be expected to learn and how they will learn, not just what students will do while learning. The instructional outcomes should reflect important learning. The alignment of outcomes to grade-level standards is essential to support ambitious instruction and high expectations for each and every student. Students should understand what they are learning, as well as how they will learn and be able to demonstrate their understanding of the content and skills. While academic content and development is obviously a priority in school, outcomes should incorporate other aspects of student development, including their social and emotional development and habits and mindsets to support learning.

Ideally teachers use high-quality instructional materials as a starting point for setting outcomes. Whether teachers begin with the objectives stated in the curriculum or develop their own based on the standards of the discipline, they must specify the appropriate learning for a given class on a given day and ensure learning experiences are goal-directed and designed to achieve certain well-defined purposes. It is through the articulation of instructional outcomes that the teacher clarifies these purposes; outcomes should be clear and describe what it is that students are intended to learn as a result of a learning experience. In classrooms organized as a community of learners, teachers also engage students in refining these outcomes, frequently in ways intended to extend their learning beyond the established curriculum.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Value and Relevance

Instructional outcomes represent ambitious learning of important content and meaningful opportunities to support student learning and development.

Alignment to Grade-Level Standards

Instructional outcomes reflect appropriate grade-level standards and communicate high expectations for each student.

Clarity of Purpose

Instructional outcomes clearly define what will be learned, why it is important, and how students will develop and demonstrate mastery of content and skills.

Integration of Multiple Aspects of Student Development

Instructional outcomes integrate academic and social-emotional development to complement and build on one another.

Considerations

- In what ways do instructional outcomes reflect the most relevant and valuable learning for students?
- In what ways do instructional outcomes align with grade-level standards to ensure ambitious instruction for all students?
- How are clear, specific instructional outcomes used to define the purpose of learning experiences?
- What are some examples of teachers integrating academic and developmental goals to extend student learning?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Instructional outcomes are not identified, are not rigorous, or are inappropriate.	Instructional outcomes are moderately rigorous and are appropriate for most students in the class.	Instructional outcomes are rigorous and appropriate for students.	Instructional outcomes represent high-level learning of important content and support student autonomy, curiosity, and intellectual risk-taking.
Value and Relevance			
Instructional outcomes are not relevant or meaningful or do not reflect important learning.	Instructional outcomes are somewhat relevant and partially reflect important learning and development.	Instructional outcomes are mostly relevant and reflect important learning and development.	Instructional outcomes consistently reflect important, meaningful, and relevant learning that requires critical thinking.
Alignment to Grade-Level Standards			
Instructional outcomes do not reflect grade-level standards.	Instructional outcomes partially reflect grade-level standards.	Instructional outcomes mostly reflect grade-level standards.	Instructional outcomes consistently reflect grade-level standards that challenge all students in the class and encourage intellectual risk taking.
Clarity of Purpose			
Instructional outcomes are unclear or are stated as activities.	Instructional outcomes are somewhat clear and partially describe what students will learn.	Instructional outcomes are mostly clear and specific, likely to ensure that students understand what they will learn and how.	Instructional outcomes are uniformly clear and specific and support students to extend their learning.
Integration of Multiple Aspects of Student Development			
Instructional outcomes do not reflect a range of purposes.	Instructional outcomes target different types of outcomes beyond academic knowledge and skills with partial success.	Instructional outcomes represent a range of high-priority, developmentally appropriate purposes, including academic, social-emotional, and character development goals.	Instructional outcomes integrate academic, social-emotional, and character development goals rather than treating them separately.

1d USING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

Using resources to support students' learning and development is part of every teacher's responsibility; these resources include items and services available both through and beyond the school. High-quality instructional materials, including curricular resources adopted by schools and districts, serve as the primary foundation for academic support. These materials and teachers' understanding of them are key to ensuring successful learning. Adopted curricula often include or recommend resources beyond the texts provided, and teachers may even need to further supplement those resources to address the needs of learners. Supplemental resources may be simple or complex, and may include physical objects, such as math manipulatives or models or science laboratory equipment; and a variety of other texts, such as maps, primary source materials, or trade books.

Technology and digital resources are an essential component of instruction and can provide additional opportunities for students to learn and grow. Online platforms cannot replace a skilled teacher and should not simply be a substitute for non-digital resources (e.g., a PDF version of a workbook), but a digitally-rich environment can provide students with opportunities to expand knowledge and practice the skills they are learning.

Beyond foundational materials, accomplished teachers access supports for students to meet their social, emotional, and academic needs. Such resources might be opportunities outside of the school provided by other organizations and community members. These often include human resources in the form of experts who provide special services, such as an instructional aide to help a student with a hearing impairment or resource room assistance for elementary students with learning differences. Some outside resources help academic learning, such as tutoring services. Others meet nonacademic needs—mentoring programs, for example, for students who have experienced trauma. As teachers gain skill and experience, they realize that they can enrich their students' experiences by locating supplemental supports that can help them better achieve their instructional purposes. This dexterity, reinforced by an awareness of what is available, is a mark of an expert.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Instructional Materials

Teachers utilize high-quality instructional materials to ensure access to rigorous content and support specific student needs, furthering engagement and mastery.

Technology and Digital Resources

Technological and digital resources support personalized instruction, equitable learning, engagement, exploration, connection, and student development.

Supports for Students

Teachers seek and provide additional aligned resources and supports that make content and curriculum materials accessible to students and address their individual needs.

Considerations

- How do teachers effectively use instructional materials to meet the needs of individual students and enhance intellectual engagement?
- In what ways do technology and digital resources enhance personalization, connection, exploration, and intellectual engagement?
- What are some ways teachers provide resources and supports for students that increase accessibility and promote student agency?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher is not aware of, or does not appropriately or effectively use instructional materials and other resources to support student learning and development.	The teacher understands and uses instructional materials and other resources to support student learning and development, but these resources represent only a narrow band of what is available.	The teacher's knowledge of instructional materials and other resources leads to discerning choices to support learning and development.	The teacher makes deliberate decisions in the use of instructional materials and other resources to meet individual student needs and support student autonomy and intellectual engagement.
Instructional Materials			
<p>When instructional materials are provided, the teacher does not use or learn to effectively implement them.</p> <p>When instructional materials are not provided, the teacher uses inappropriate or ineffective materials of their own choosing that do not support rigorous instruction or engagement.</p>	<p>When instructional materials are provided, the teacher implements them with some success, develops some understanding of their features and design, and is sometimes able to recognize and adjust for gaps or deficiencies in the materials.</p> <p>When instructional materials are not provided, the teacher selects and uses materials that are partially aligned to standards to serve as the core of instruction and support student learning and development.</p>	<p>When instructional materials are provided, the teacher's understanding of the materials supports appropriate choices based on the specific needs of students that increase the effectiveness of the curriculum.</p> <p>When instructional materials are not provided, the teacher relies on a strong core set of instructional materials aligned to rigorous standards and makes choices based on the specific needs of students that increase the effectiveness of those materials.</p>	<p>When instructional materials are provided, the teacher uses them wisely, integrating other resources if appropriate, to support each student's mastery of outcomes, further learning and development, deep intellectual engagement, and autonomy.</p> <p>When instructional materials are not provided, the teacher identifies a strong core set of instructional materials and uses them wisely, integrating other resources if appropriate to support each student's mastery of outcomes, further learning and development, and deep intellectual engagement.</p>
Technology and Digital Resources			
The teacher does not appropriately access digital resources to support student learning and development.	The teacher uses technology and accesses digital resources that partially support student learning but may be primarily a substitution for other resources.	Technology and other digital resources are used effectively to support equitable student learning and exploration, as well as connection and development.	Technology and other digital resources support intellectual engagement, personalized instructional pathways for student learning and development.
Supports for Students			
The teacher does not inquire about or seek out resources to support individual student needs.	The teacher seeks some additional resources and supports aligned to the individual needs of students.	The teacher provides resources and supports aligned to students' individual needs and learning differences, allowing each student to access the curriculum and meet the learning outcomes.	Resources and supports provided or suggested by the teacher promote student agency and increase efficacy in utilizing resources to support their own learning and development.

1e PLANNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION

The teacher's knowledge of the content, students, and resources all come together to enhance student learning of instructional outcomes through the design and implementation of instructional plans. A critical feature of instructional design is coherence; that is, the different elements of the plan—the outcomes, activities, materials, methods, and grouping of students—all support one another. Even in classrooms where students assume considerable responsibility for their learning, the teacher establishes the framework for investigations through tasks and activities. The important question to be answered is this: “How will students learn?” There are many options, of course. They could work—either alone or together—to solve a problem, participate in a class discussion, or reflect in their journals on new information. The list is endless, and skilled teachers draw on high-quality materials and their own extensive repertoire when making these decisions.

When teachers have access to well-designed instructional materials, much of the work of unit and lesson design has been done by the materials' developers; indeed, this is one of the principal benefits of using such materials. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that in such cases teachers play no role at all in planning coherent instruction, which is, after all, more complex than simply implementing a plan. A curriculum serves as a starting point in preparing for coherent instruction but does not ensure student learning. Excellent teachers adapt curriculum to meet the needs of the students who are in front of them without compromising their high expectations. Opportunities for flexible learning and thoughtful collaboration are additional elements to consider in planning. The teacher, whether designing or adjusting the structure and flow of learning experiences, plays a critical role in arranging for learners to do the learning.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Tasks and Activities

Tasks and activities are specifically matched to learning outcomes, encourage higher-level thinking and student agency, and create authentic opportunities to engage with meaningful content.

Flexible Learning

Multiple strategies and approaches are tailored to individual student needs to create the appropriate level of challenge and support for each student.

Student Collaboration

Student groups are an essential component of learning and development, and are organized thoughtfully to maximize opportunities and build on students' strengths.

Structure and Flow

Lesson and unit plans are well structured and flow from one to the next to support student learning and development.

Considerations

- In what ways do aligned tasks and activities provide opportunities for students to meaningfully engage with content?
- What are some ways that individualized strategies and approaches are used to support student success?
- How do teachers plan thoughtfully organized instructional groups that will build on students' strengths, encourage dialogue, and foster collaboration?
- How are lessons and learning experiences arranged and structured to build upon and enhance student learning and autonomy?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The design of learning experiences does not support student engagement with important content.	Learning experiences are somewhat coherent in structure, within and across lessons, partially supporting students to meet the intended outcomes.	Learning experiences are challenging and engaging; they are designed to meet the needs of students in the class.	Learning experiences prioritize the needs of individual students, ensure all students can meet the intended outcomes, and support student assumption of responsibility for learning.
Tasks and Activities			
Tasks and activities are uninteresting to students, do not challenge them, and/or do not align to instructional outcomes.	Tasks and activities are partially aligned to the instructional outcomes and represent a modest level of intellectual challenge.	Tasks and activities are aligned with learning outcomes and provide opportunities for higher-level thinking.	Tasks and activities encourage student agency and create authentic opportunities to engage with meaningful content.
Flexible Learning			
There is only a single approach or activity planned for students to learn the content.	There are multiple ways for students to learn the content and a variety of strategies are used with some success during the lesson.	Multiple strategies and approaches are tailored to the needs of various students to accelerate and support their success.	Lessons provide opportunities for students to engage beyond the content of the lesson; and, when appropriate, the teacher works with students to co-design learning experiences.
Student Collaboration			
Student groupings are not used or do not support learning.	Students are in groups that are only partially appropriate to the learning activities or goals.	Instructional groups are organized thoughtfully to maximize learning and build on students' strengths.	Collaboration through teacher-designed and student-chosen instructional groups is an essential component of learning and development.
Structure and Flow			
Plans for learning are not well structured or sequenced.	Plans for learning are partially well-structured but may not be realistic about time expectations.	Plans for learning are well structured and have a flow that allows for student learning and reflection.	Plans for learning are well structured and have a flow that supports student autonomy in the learning process.

1f DESIGNING AND ANALYZING ASSESSMENTS

Assessment plays a critical role in learning and serves as a powerful instructional tool for teachers. It has two related, though distinct, primary uses: assessment of learning and assessment for learning. In either case, there must be congruence with instructional outcomes as well as clear criteria for measuring success. The first purpose, assessment of learning (or summative assessment) is used to determine that students have, in fact, achieved the instructional outcomes. Teachers realize the full power of assessment when they include assessments for learning (or formative assessments) in their planning. Formative assessments are designed to provide information to both students and teachers on progress and to guide next steps. One hallmark of a great curriculum is that it includes multiple, varied approaches to formative assessment: standard “checks for understanding” that give quick snapshots of student progress, specific questions that require written responses, or questions to ask while conferencing with students. These assessments become opportunities for students to develop intellectual virtues such as autonomy, critical thinking, reflection, tenacity, and humility.

Analysis and application of data from both types of assessment are key components of high-quality curricula and effective instruction. For assessment to yield useful information, teachers must give careful attention to student responses both during and after instruction. Gathering assessment information can sometimes be an informal process—done, for example, during a class discussion. When it is gathered more systematically, such as through an assignment or performance task, it is essential for teachers to examine and analyze the student work, to determine what has not yet been learned. In addition, this analysis provides important information to teachers regarding their instructional techniques. After examining student work, they may conclude, “That approach didn’t work!” This process of analysis and application of new understanding makes assessment a critical connection between planning and implementation. The instructional decisions described throughout Domain 1 are based in large part on the analysis of data derived from a variety of assessments.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Congruence with Instructional Outcomes

Aligned assessments provide accurate, clear evidence and allow for the analysis of student understanding and mastery of instructional outcomes.

Criteria and Standards

Criteria and standards for assessment are appropriate and aligned, clearly communicated, and whenever possible have been developed with student input.

Planning Formative Assessments

Teachers plan formative assessments to monitor student progress toward instructional outcomes, make needed adjustments, and support students to monitor their own learning.

Analysis and Application

Teachers consistently use assessment data to direct planning and preparation and to support individualized student instruction.

Considerations

- What are some ways that students are given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of content?
- How are clear assessment criteria and standards developed and understood by students?
- How do teachers design formative assessments that allow for adjustments to instruction and support student agency?
- How is assessment data analyzed and applied to inform instructional decision-making?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
There is no plan for assessment or the assessments will not provide evidence that students have learned the intended outcomes.	Assessments will partially help the teacher determine whether students have learned or are learning the intended outcomes.	Assessments are planned throughout the instructional process and provide timely and valuable information to teachers and feedback to students.	Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content, set goals, and analyze their own progress through multiple, flexible assessments.
Congruence with Instructional Outcomes			
Assessments are not aligned to the instructional outcomes.	Assessments are partially aligned to instructional outcomes but may not assess them completely.	Assessments will fully and fairly provide evidence of student understanding of the content and mastery of outcomes, as well as reveal specific misunderstandings.	Students have varied and multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of outcomes; assessments allow for the analysis of student misunderstandings, revealing how and why the misunderstanding occurred.
Criteria and Standards			
Assessments lack criteria by which student performance can be accurately assessed.	Assessment criteria and standards have been developed, but they are unclear or too vague.	Assessment criteria and standards are established, clear, and fully understood by students.	Assessment criteria and standards are clear, and students have contributed to their development.
Planning Formative Assessments			
There are no formative assessments planned.	Some formative assessments are planned and will give a partially accurate picture of student learning throughout the lesson.	Formative assessments will give an accurate picture of student learning, and plans for lessons indicate possible adjustments based on formative assessment data.	Formative assessments will provide accurate and timely information to teachers and students, allowing students to adjust course with minimal teacher guidance.
Analysis and Application			
Assessment results are not relevant or used for future planning.	Assessment results are used in future planning for some students, groups of students, or the class as a whole.	Assessment results from prior lessons and units are a key tool used by the teacher in planning future instruction.	Assessment results consistently drive planning and preparation to inform instructional decision making and instructional pathways for students.

DOMAIN 2

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

DOMAIN 2

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The components of Domain 2: Learning Environments describe conditions and qualities of environments that are conducive to learning and support student success. These aspects of teaching are not associated with the learning of any particular content but rather support the understanding of all content and attend to the social-emotional needs of students. The components of Domain 2 center on establishing a safe and respectful classroom environment and require explicit attention and responsiveness to the individual identities of students, such as race and culture, and the values of the broader community the school serves. Fostering an inviting culture for learning that focuses on student wellbeing, encourages academic risk-taking, and promotes habits and mindsets that support student success is the ultimate goal of these components.

Learning environments should be supportive and challenging. Though what this looks like and how it is established varies, the components of Domain 2 describe common attributes that enhance student success in the context of school, including intentional non-instructional routines and procedures, positive student relationships and behaviors, and spaces that support instructional purposes. When students remember their favorite teachers years later, their memories are often connected to the components and elements of Domain 2. They recall the empathy and caring



teachers demonstrated, their high expectations for achievement, and their commitment to students' well-being. Students feel safe with these teachers and know they can count on them to be fair, equitable, honest, and compassionate. Successful teachers know their natural authority with students is grounded in their knowledge and expertise rather than in their role alone. They recognize that their role and their interactions with students are also situated within a larger societal context, so they carefully reflect upon their own identity and biases to better connect with students.

DOMAIN 2 COMPONENTS

2a Cultivating Respectful and Affirming Environments

2b Fostering a Culture for Learning

2c Maintaining Purposeful Environments

2d Supporting Positive Student Behavior

2e Organizing Spaces for Learning

Teachers who excel in Domain 2: Learning Environments also create an atmosphere of excitement about the importance of learning, significance of the content, and the capacity of their students to master the materials. They are themselves curious, care deeply about their subject, and invite students to share the journey of learning. These teachers affirm their students' humanity: their culture, histories, interests, concerns, intellectual potential, and sense of purpose. They take into account the individual identities and brilliance of each student when planning and leading learning. Respectful and challenging learning environments support not only the development of intellectual skills and traits (e.g., autonomy, curiosity, academic tenacity, and reflection) but also social and emotional ones (e.g., self-regulation) that are essential to the development of the whole child, including identity and purpose development, social awareness and relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Excellent teachers support students as they develop and practice compassion, empathy, honesty, respect for others, wisdom, courage, and a sense of justice. Through the environment, they help students learn the importance of dialogue, civility, responsibility, collaboration, and community.



	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2a Cultivating Respectful and Affirming Environments	Students do not feel safe and valued; learning environments are characterized by negativity, disrespect, inappropriateness, insensitivity, and/or unresolved conflict.	Learning environments are partially characterized by caring and respectful interactions.	Learning environments are characterized by positive developmental relationships that are intentionally nurtured and celebrated.	Students play an active role in creating learning environments characterized by a sense of community, where each member feels safe, valued, and connected.
2b Fostering a Culture for Learning	The culture of the class is not conducive to learning and does not support development.	The culture of the class is partially conducive to learning and development.	The culture of the class is characterized by high expectations and supports students' learning and development.	Students play an active role in establishing a culture that consistently fosters dialogue, reflection, and growth, allowing all students to experience success.
2c Maintaining Purposeful Environments	Student learning and development are hindered by a lack of routines or inefficient classroom procedures.	Classroom routines and procedures, established or managed primarily by the teacher and taught explicitly to students, support opportunities for student learning and development.	Shared routines and efficient procedures are largely student-directed and maximize opportunities for student learning and development.	Students have a voice and play an active role in designing and adjusting routines and procedures that actively create a respectful learning environment and support the growth of each community member.
2d Supporting Positive Student Behavior	There is little evidence of explicit modeling, instruction, or guidance related to positive student behaviors.	Positive behaviors are modeled by the teacher and occasionally taught explicitly.	Students display positive behaviors, which are modeled by teachers and reinforced to promote reflection and recalibration rather than compliance.	Students consistently and independently display positive behaviors and seek opportunities to build a better classroom community.
2e Organizing Spaces for Learning	Learning spaces are unsafe, inaccessible, and/or not conducive to learning and development.	Learning spaces are safe and accessible; the arrangement and use of resources partially support student learning and development.	Learning spaces are thoughtfully designed to address the needs of individual learners within the context of shared experiences.	Learning spaces are thoughtfully co-designed and modified as needed by members of the learning community to address the needs of individuals and create collaborative, joyful spaces for all to learn and grow.

2a CULTIVATING RESPECTFUL AND AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS

Co-creating an environment with students built on respect is a critical element of a teacher's skill in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and students' academic success. In any context, students need to experience safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments where each of them is valued, feels like a full member of the community, and is supported to take academic and intellectual risks. An environment of respect and rapport is essential for learning and development to occur.

Positive relationships between teachers and students and among students provide a foundation for collaborative learning. The nature of learning in today's classrooms is inherently social. When intentional relationships form the foundation of a respectful environment that honors the dignity of each student, students feel a sense of belonging in the classroom community. Teaching depends, fundamentally, on the quality of relationships among individuals, which are built through and reflected in classroom activities and practices. For instance, the way in which teachers engage students in a discussion or an activity speaks volumes about the extent to which they value their students as individuals.

Classroom environments that support learning for each student are co-created with them and characterized by cultural responsiveness and responsibility; they reflect, honor, and sustain shared values and individual identities. Even in the most respectful classrooms, as in all human endeavors, conflict is likely to arise, and positive conflict resolution is a key aspect of maintaining an environment of respect and rapport, as well as repairing harm and restoring justice when necessary. Co-establishing these community agreements or classroom norms for interaction and conflict resolution is as important as establishing standards of conduct or routines for activities such as sharpening pencils—aspects of creating a learning community that experienced teachers focus much attention on at the outset of a school year.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Positive Relationships

Teacher-student and student-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect and honor the dignity of each member of the community.

Sense of Belonging

Teachers and students co-create a community that reflects their unique collective identity and interests as a class while honoring individual identities.

Cultural Responsiveness

Ways of interacting in the classroom are culturally responsive, and they are supported by teachers' own cultural competence and understanding of societal dynamics and their impact on learning environments.

Positive Conflict Resolution

A clear and culturally competent approach to conflict resolution has been established and is used effectively to resolve conflict and restore trust.

Considerations

- How have teachers intentionally nurtured relationships with and among students?
- What evidence indicates that the students feel a sense of shared identity while also feeling celebrated as individuals?
- In what ways do teachers demonstrate cultural competence in creating an inclusive learning environment?
- What are some ways that teachers maintain a positive and respectful rapport while addressing and resolving student conflicts?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Students do not feel safe and valued; learning environments are characterized by negativity, disrespect, inappropriateness, insensitivity, and/or unresolved conflict.	Learning environments are partially characterized by caring and respectful interactions.	Learning environments are characterized by positive developmental relationships that are intentionally nurtured and celebrated.	Students play an active role in creating learning environments characterized by a sense of community, where each member feels safe, valued, and connected.
Positive Relationships			
Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are frequently negative, uncaring, inappropriate, or insensitive to students' identities and developmental levels.	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are inconsistently caring and respectful, but form a foundation for positive relationships to develop.	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, demonstrate caring and respect that honors students' identities, race, and cultural background.	Patterns of interacting in the classroom are culturally responsive; the teacher's own cultural competence and critical consciousness foster positive relationships and students take an active role in developing and sustaining positive relationships.
Sense of Belonging			
Some students' verbal or nonverbal communication indicates that they feel isolated, insecure, or not part of the classroom community.	Verbal and nonverbal communication indicates that many students feel part of a classroom community that welcomes and honors their individual identity.	Verbal and nonverbal participation indicates most students participate in a class community that reflects their collective identity while honoring individual variations.	Student participation indicates they are co-creating a community that reflects their unique collective identity and interests as a class while honoring individual identity.
Cultural Responsiveness			
Learning environments do not reflect the individual racial and cultural identities of students.	Learning environments reflect and honor some elements of students' individual and shared racial and cultural identities.	Learning environments reflect elements of students' racial and cultural identities while recognizing, addressing, and honoring differences between students' and teachers' unique identities.	Students have helped create a unique identity for their class that includes all, celebrates each individual's racial and cultural identity, honors diversity, and acknowledges and addresses racial and cultural dynamics at play in the environment.
Positive Conflict Resolution			
Conflict and disrespectful interactions occur in the classroom and are neither addressed nor resolved.	Conflict and disrespectful interactions are addressed by the teacher, with uneven results.	A clear and culturally competent approach to conflict resolution has been established and is used effectively to resolve conflict and restore trust.	Students in the class are responsible for resolving conflict and actively follow established processes or norms for resolving conflict and restoring trust.

2b FOSTERING A CULTURE FOR LEARNING

“A culture for learning” refers to an atmosphere in the learning environment that reflects the importance of the work undertaken by both students and teachers. It describes the norms that govern the interactions among individuals about the activities and assignments, the value of hard work and perseverance, and the general tone of the class. Ideally, this culture supports meaningful engagement and dialogue, joyful inquiry, rigorous learning, and reflection. Purpose and motivation are evident and shared by teachers and students in a classroom with rigorous and joyful learning at its center. There is a clear sense of dedication to learning; both content mastery and personal growth are valued. As part of a culture for learning, emphasis is placed on dispositions (e.g., compassion, curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection) that support student success and their social, emotional, and academic development. These dispositions are modeled, encouraged, and explicitly taught and reinforced.

Learning in successful classrooms is not just dictated or directed by the teacher but is characterized by student agency and autonomy; students have choices and assume responsibility for their own learning. A strong culture for learning rests on high expectations accompanied by support. When a strong culture for learning has been established, other aspects of teaching become easier and more rewarding. Students view the classroom as a space for connecting and engaging; they assume responsibility for their learning, they persevere through challenges, and they have confidence in their abilities. Students come to recognize important academic learning, and the intellectual challenges that accompany it, as rewarding. When they master complex material, they enjoy the satisfaction that comes only from demonstrating competence in important and demanding work. Without the components of a culture for learning in place, high-level learning is unlikely to occur.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Purpose and Motivation

Teachers and students share an overarching dedication to both content mastery and personal growth.

Dispositions for Learning

Teachers model, encourage, explicitly teach, and reinforce curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection to support student success and their social, emotional, and academic growth.

Student Agency and Pride in Work

Students make informed choices, devote energy to learning, take pride in their accomplishments, and actively suggest ways to make the classroom more joyful, rigorous, and purposeful.

Support and Perseverance

Teachers and students encourage one another to persevere and use strategies to support each other through challenging work.

Considerations

- How do the teacher and students demonstrate their dedication to content mastery and personal growth?
- What evidence indicates that teachers have explicitly modeled and taught the skills that allow students to successfully pursue learning?
- In what ways do students demonstrate their agency in the classroom?
- What are some ways that students and teachers support and demonstrate perseverance through difficult work?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The culture of the class is not conducive to learning and does not support development.	The culture of the class is somewhat conducive to learning and development.	The culture of the class is characterized by high expectations and supports students' learning and development.	Students play an active role in establishing a culture that consistently fosters dialogue, reflection, and growth, allowing all students to experience success.
Purpose and Motivation			
There is little or no sense of purpose for the work or the reasons for doing it are external demands.	The teacher communicates the importance of content, the ultimate purpose of learning, and the value of personal growth with some success.	The teacher and students demonstrate a belief in the importance of learning and personal growth that motivates them to succeed and flourish.	The teacher and students display dedication to learning the content and a sense of purpose for their learning; both content mastery and personal growth are valued by the teacher and students.
Dispositions for Learning			
Student curiosity is ignored or discouraged; students are not asked to think critically or to reason and reflect.	Student curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection are occasionally encouraged.	Curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection are encouraged and intentionally developed.	Student curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection are clearly evident in the classroom and have a direct impact on instruction, student learning, and development.
Student Agency and Pride in Work			
Students have little or no agency in learning experiences or classroom life.	Students are given some opportunities to exercise agency, though they may not be taken up or may be infrequent.	Students have multiple opportunities to exercise agency, and autonomy is intentionally developed and celebrated.	Students clearly exercise autonomy in their learning and actively suggest ways to make the classroom more joyful, rigorous, and purposeful.
Support and Perseverance			
The teacher conveys that the work is too challenging for all or some of the students or that they lack the perseverance to succeed; students are allowed or expected to quit.	Confidence, resilience, persistence, and teamwork are encouraged, promoting a conviction that with hard work and perseverance all students can master the content.	Confidence, resilience, persistence, and teamwork that support student perseverance are intentionally developed and celebrated.	Students encourage one another to persevere and use strategies to support each other through challenging work.

2C MAINTAINING PURPOSEFUL ENVIRONMENTS

Teaching is a complex activity, and learning spaces are complex ecosystems that can be supported through the design of routines and procedures to support a purposeful environment. Though effective routines and procedures can (and should) take on a variety of forms, establishing and maintaining them is essential to the success of a classroom community. Because teachers' goals for students include intellectual engagement, collaboration, and autonomy—and because there are often 30 students with them at a time - thoughtful routines and procedures can help all members of the classroom community act with purpose.

Routines and procedures are not established for the sake of control; rather, they intentionally support other aspects of learning and development. For instance, routines for purposeful collaboration are modeled, taught, and reinforced so that students work cooperatively within the classroom community to support one another's success. Other routines support student autonomy and responsibility and the development of skills, habits, and mindsets that promote student success. Routines and procedures can also establish equitable access to resources and supports. Finally, though sometimes less obviously, non-instructional tasks must also be handled efficiently to focus time and energy on learning.

As with other components of instruction, it is important to remember that routines and procedures are not established in a vacuum but must reflect the students and their needs. Teachers committed to valuing and affirming students are especially thoughtful about the routines and procedures and the ways in which they are chosen, established, and maintained. They look to their students, families, the school, and community to learn more about how shared norms and values can be reflected in the classroom's routines. Routines and procedures that are “effective” because they are efficient or suggest choice where none exists, may not always honor the dignity of students and, in the end, may not actually be effective at all.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Productive Collaboration

Collaboration is modeled, taught, and reinforced so that students work purposefully and cooperatively in groups, to support one another's success.

Student Autonomy and Responsibility

Routines support student assumption of responsibility and the development of skills, habits, and mindsets that promote student autonomy.

Equitable Access to Resources and Supports

Resources and supports are deployed efficiently, effectively, and equitably for the benefit of all students.

Non-Instructional Tasks

Teachers complete non-instructional tasks with little to no loss of instructional time or disruption to lesson delivery.

Considerations

- In what ways do teachers thoughtfully and purposefully teach and utilize collaboration in the classroom?
- What evidence indicates that classroom procedures that support student responsibility and autonomy have been taught and are responsive to students' needs?
- How do teachers distribute resources and supports in a way that ensures equitable access for all students?
- How do teachers complete non-instructional tasks so that they do not take away from instructional time?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Student learning and development are hindered by a lack of routines or inefficient classroom procedures.	Classroom routines and procedures, established or managed primarily by the teacher, support opportunities for student learning and development.	Shared routines and efficient procedures are largely student-directed and maximize opportunities for student learning and development.	Students have a voice and play an active role in designing and adjusting routines and procedures that actively create a respectful learning environment and support the growth of each community member.
Productive Collaboration			
Students are not productively engaged during group work.	Students are somewhat engaged in group work.	Students are productively engaged during small group work, working purposefully and collaboratively with their peers.	Students play an active role in ensuring their time in groups is used purposefully and meets their individual and group needs.
Student Autonomy and Responsibility			
Routines do not support student autonomy or assumption of responsibility.	Routines and procedures partially support student autonomy and assumption of responsibility.	Routines and procedures allow students to operate autonomously and take responsibility for their learning.	Students take responsibility for routines and procedures and take initiative to suggest adjustments that would further support their learning and development.
Equitable Access to Resources and Supports			
Resources and supports are not deployed efficiently, effectively, or equitably.	Resources and supports are managed somewhat efficiently and effectively, though students may not have equitable access.	Resources and supports are deployed efficiently and effectively; all students are able to access what they need.	Resources and supports are deployed equitably; students take initiative in accessing resources and identifying additional supports they need.
Non-Instructional Tasks			
Non-instructional tasks are not completed or completed inefficiently, resulting in loss of instructional time or potential danger to students.	Non-instructional tasks are completed with some efficiency, but instructional time is lost.	Most non-instructional tasks are completed efficiently, with little loss of instructional time.	Non-instructional tasks are completed seamlessly with no loss of instructional time.

2d SUPPORTING POSITIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

In order for learning to occur and for students to feel safe and valued, teachers must attend to supporting a climate of respectful behavior in ways that affirm the dignity of each student. Learning is not supported in an environment characterized by disengagement, apathy, resistance, or bullying. At the same time, the aim of the effective teacher is not to control students or use authority or punitive approaches to eliminate “misbehavior,” but rather to support motivation, compassion, and other positive behaviors within the classroom. Purposeful classroom rules and norms - alongside engaging instruction - combine to support an optimal learning environment that allows students to grow and thrive.

Classrooms, no matter what form they take, are crowded and busy places. Successful learning environments have established expectations to support the common good that are culturally responsive and reflect shared norms and values. Within these environments, it is the teacher’s responsibility to support students by modeling and teaching habits of character (such as compassion and respect) that lead to high-quality learning environments and ultimately help students to act ethically in a variety of settings. Excellent teachers do not simply dictate and then reinforce positive behavior; they work with students to promote them by encouraging self-monitoring, reflection, and collective responsibility.

While ground rules for expected behavior are important, teachers who excel in “classroom management” focus on fostering positive behavior that ultimately results in purposeful self-management as students develop the dispositions and traits they need to make good choices and successfully navigate a variety of contexts. They help students develop and maintain shared norms and expectations, provide opportunities for students to reflect on their interactions with one another, and approach student behavior with community-mindedness—the idea that building a better classroom community is a shared endeavor.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Expectations for the Learning Community

Students play an active role in establishing and maintaining expectations for the learning community with regular opportunities for critical reflection both individually and as a group.

Modeling and Teaching Habits of Character

Teachers model, explicitly teach, and reinforce habits that promote learning, ethical behavior, and citizenship.

Self-Monitoring and Collective Responsibility

Students successfully monitor their own behavior, attend to their impact on other students, and appropriately support one another.

Considerations

- In what ways do students demonstrate that clear expectations have been established with their active and continued input?
- What are some ways that teachers model and teach habits of character that develop positive behavior in students?
- What evidence indicates that students monitor and reflect on their behavior and the impact it has on their classmates and their learning?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
There is little evidence of explicit modeling, instruction, or guidance related to positive student behavior.	Positive behavior is modeled by the teacher and occasionally taught explicitly.	Students display positive behaviors, which are modeled by teachers and reinforced to promote reflection and recalibration rather than compliance.	Students consistently and independently display positive behaviors and seek opportunities to build a better classroom community.
Expectations for the Learning Community			
There are no clear expectations and/or negative behavior is not addressed.	There are expectations established to promote positive behavior but with uneven success.	Expectations have been successfully established and agreed upon.	Students play an active role in establishing and maintaining expectations, with regular opportunities for critical reflection both individually and as a group.
Modeling and Teaching Habits of Character			
There is no explicit modeling or teaching of habits of character.	Habits of character are modeled or taught but with uneven success.	Habits of character are modeled, explicitly taught, and reinforced to promote learning, ethical behavior, and citizenship.	Students take initiative in explicitly discussing and reinforcing habits of character that contribute to a safe and productive learning environment.
Self-Monitoring and Collective Responsibility			
Students take no responsibility for their own behavior and do not display awareness of their impact on others.	The teacher encourages students to monitor their own and one another's behavior and emphasizes collective responsibility but with uneven success.	Students successfully monitor their own behavior and attend to their impact on other students.	Students successfully monitor their own behavior and appropriately support one another in demonstrating positive behavior.

2e ORGANIZING SPACES FOR LEARNING

What constitutes a classroom space is evolving rapidly and may be different from school to school or teacher to teacher. Some teachers teach in a standard classroom, some travel from classroom to classroom, some teach primarily online, and others teach in a gym or on a stage. Regardless, teachers are responsible for working with their students to create a joyful environment that promotes learning. As part of the work of organizing the space, teachers must attend to safety and equitable accessibility for all students. Beyond this necessity, excellent teachers prioritize design for learning and development. In other words, their classes are not simply arranged for efficiency or based on personal preferences but are thoughtfully designed to support learning and the work that students do with one another.

Though arrangement of objects and resources may vary greatly from space to space, the best spaces for learning reflect shared ownership - a space where all members of the community feel safe, belong, and can learn. When a classroom is a true community of learners, students themselves become involved in the creation of a beautiful and joyful environment and take initiative in ensuring it meets their needs. They may, for example, plan a display of work, move furniture to facilitate a group project, or shift supplies to improve traffic flow. They may lower the shades to block the sun from a classmate's eyes or shut the door to keep out hall noise. It is their space, and they make it work to promote learning. Naturally, such student involvement can only occur when the teacher cultivates and encourages student participation in establishing the environment as a shared space from the outset.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Safety and Accessibility

The learning space is safe and accessible to all students and is modified if necessary by students or teachers to accommodate individual student needs.

Design for Learning and Development

The learning space is thoughtfully designed and adjusted as necessary to support and facilitate learning activities.

Co-Creation and Shared Ownership

Students play a role in the design and adjustment of the learning space and demonstrate a sense of ownership through appropriate participation and interaction.

Considerations

- How do teachers and students modify the learning space as needed to make sure it is safe and accessible?
- What evidence indicates that the learning space has been designed specifically to suit and support the content and the students?
- In what ways is student input applied to create a sense of shared ownership over the learning space?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Learning spaces are unsafe, inaccessible, and/or not conducive to learning and development.	Learning spaces are safe and accessible; the arrangement and use of resources partially supports student learning and development.	Learning spaces are thoughtfully designed to address the needs of individual learners within the context of shared experiences.	Learning spaces are thoughtfully co-designed and modified as needed by members of the learning community to address the needs of individuals and create collaborative, joyful spaces for all to learn and grow.
Safety and Accessibility			
The space endangers student safety or is not accessible to all students.	The space is generally safe and accessible with some issues that need to be addressed.	The space is safe and accessible to all students.	Modifications are made to the environment as necessary by students and teachers to accommodate individual needs.
Design for Learning and Development			
The design of the space is an impediment to learning and development.	The design of the space is not an impediment to learning but does not enhance it.	The design of the space supports student learning and development and is appropriate for the goals and activities.	The design of the space optimizes learning and development and is appropriately adjusted to align to goals and activities.
Co-Creation and Shared Ownership			
Students do not help create or arrange the space for learning and demonstrate little pride or ownership in the space.	Students have some voice in creating the space and demonstrate some ownership of it.	Students have a voice in creating the space and demonstrate shared ownership of it.	Students take initiative in designing the space, demonstrate a sense of pride and ownership, and adjust the space as necessary to create a more beautiful and joyful environment.

DOMAIN 3

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

DOMAIN 3

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The components of Domain 3: Learning Experiences describe the engagement of students in learning experiences and reflect the primary mission of schools: enhancing student learning and growth. These components are unified through a vision of students developing complex understanding, achieving goals, cultivating purpose, and participating in a community of learners. The components of the other domains provide a foundation for purposeful, engaging, and successful learning experiences. In many ways, success in Domain 3 is the direct result of success in Domains 1 and 2 in particular. Teachers prepare experiences that are grounded in deep understanding of the content, aligned with appropriate standards, designed to engage students in important work, and planned or adapted with the goals, strengths, needs, and lives of each student in mind. Learning experiences can only be consistently successful for each student when the environment, nurtured by the teacher in collaboration with students, is a space where students are affirmed and challenged.

DOMAIN 3 COMPONENTS

3a Communicating About Purpose and Content

3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

3c Engaging Students in Learning

3d Using Assessment for Learning

3e Responding Flexibly to Student Needs



During effective learning experiences, students are engaged in meaningful work, which carries significance beyond the next test and can provide skills and knowledge necessary for answering significant questions or contributing to important projects. Their engagement is relevant and meaningful to them as individuals. Teachers use practices and take actions that not only advance student learning, but also affirm the humanity of their students. Through learning experiences, successful teachers build on students' strengths and assets, support the ongoing development of intellectual habits and mindsets (such as curiosity, reasoning, and reflection), encourage the development and pursuit of individual and collective purposes, and further strengthen motivation, confidence, and perseverance. Such teachers prepare and support students to assume responsibility for their own learning, and the student initiative they expect motivates students to excel. The work undertaken through experiences in the learning community is real and significant; it is important to students as well as to teachers.

Teachers who excel in the components of Domain 3: Learning Experiences have finely honed instructional skills. Their work in the classroom is fluid and flexible; they can shift easily from one approach to another when the situation demands it. They seamlessly incorporate ideas and concepts from other parts of the curriculum into their explanations, relating, for example, what the students have just learned to previous learning or real-world experience. Their questions probe student thinking and serve to extend understanding. They monitor understanding and are attentive to different students in the class and the degree to which the students are thoughtfully engaged; when they observe inattention or struggle, they make adjustments. And above all, the most successful teachers teach, model, and coach their students to take responsibility for and ownership of their own learning. When this is the case, students are the ones asking questions, maintaining the momentum of discussions, suggesting alternative approaches and new lines of inquiry, and consistently monitoring their own progress.



	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3a Communicating About Purpose and Content	Communication about purpose and content is unclear or confusing and hinders student learning.	Communication about purpose and content is mostly clear and accurate; it partially supports learning.	Communication about purpose and content is accurate and clear to students; it supports their active engagement in learning experiences and models effective use of language.	Communication about purpose and content is rich, nuanced, and relevant to students inviting them to think critically and contribute intellectually; it encourages curiosity and supports student autonomy.
3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	Questioning and discussion are absent, low-level, or do not support learning and development.	Questioning and discussion, primarily framed and led by the teacher, are used to support student learning and development.	Questioning and discussion, framed or led by the teacher and students, effectively support critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection.	Students intentionally use questioning and discussion to develop their own and others' thinking, reasoning skills, and habits of reflection.
3c Engaging Students in Learning	Learning experiences do not require active intellectual engagement by students.	Learning experiences partially engage students intellectually; the activities require students to do some thinking.	Learning experiences support curiosity and exploration and encourage higher-order thinking; students engage in multiple ways and represent their ideas and responses through multiple means.	Students take initiative to increase the challenge or complexity of learning experiences; they think critically about a variety of issues and offer solutions; and they make suggestions for modifications that increase meaning and relevance.
3d Using Assessment for Learning	Formative assessment is not used during instruction or is not aligned to the instructional purpose of the lesson.	Formative assessment partially supports student learning and development.	The teacher and students use formative assessments to elicit evidence of understanding, analyze progress, and provide constructive feedback.	Students take initiative to analyze their own progress against a clear standard in order to achieve the outcome and identify new opportunities and challenges.
3e Responding Flexibly to Student Needs	The teacher makes no adjustments to learning experiences, even when warranted, and is not responsive to student needs.	The teacher makes some adjustments to learning experiences and is responsive to student needs with partial success.	The teacher's adjustments and responsiveness lead to deeper understanding for students and/or new learning experiences.	Based on self-monitoring and reflection, students voice their needs, ask questions, and make suggestions that lead to adjustments and modifications or spark new learning opportunities.

3a COMMUNICATING ABOUT PURPOSE AND CONTENT

Teachers communicate with students constantly and for a variety of purposes. While any communication with or between students has a direct connection to many of the components of learning environments, communication related to the purposes of learning, the expectations for activities, and the content itself are essential aspects of instruction that support (or hinder) students' intellectual engagement and academic success.

Successful teachers consistently and effectively communicate that learning is a purposeful activity and make the goals and objectives of specific learning experiences clear to students. They emphasize the purpose of these goals, both in relation to the larger curriculum and students' own interests and purposes, and communicate the why behind the goals in a way that makes them meaningful and relevant. Effective teachers also explain how students will learn and what it will look like when they are successful. Specific learning activities require clear directions and expectations so that students can engage successfully. Constructivist teachers often facilitate experiences that guide students to develop insights and discover underlying principles or ideas on their own. In such cases, there may initially be more focus on explaining how students will engage rather than exactly what they will learn, but explaining the insights and learning that develop as a result of these experiences is critical work for students and teachers.

When teachers present concepts and information, they do so accurately and clearly, using precise, academic language. They often do so imaginatively as well, embellishing their descriptions, using multiple means of representation to explain content, employing analogies or metaphors to support understanding, and linking the content to students' own lives and prior knowledge. They use vivid, rich, and appropriate academic language and support and encourage students to do the same.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Purpose for Learning and Criteria for Success

Teachers communicate the goals and objectives of learning activities and outline an instructional pathway for students to meet the established criteria for success.

Specific Expectations

Student actions during each step of learning activities are clearly and effectively communicated with specific expectations articulated and reinforced throughout.

Explanations of Content

Content knowledge is scaffolded and presented in multiple, engaging ways with frequent, integrated checks for student understanding.

Use of Academic Language

Verbal and written content-related language used by teachers and students is academically rigorous, accurate, and subject and grade appropriate.

Considerations

- How do students connect to the purpose and value of learning to grow both academically and personally?
- What are some ways that students show that they understand the expectations associated with learning activities and the process of learning?
- How do students demonstrate that content has been explained in a way that enhances their understanding?
- In what ways do teachers and students use rigorous and accurate academic language to build content knowledge?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Communication about purpose and content is unclear or confusing and hinders student learning.	Communication about purpose and content is mostly clear and accurate; it partially supports learning.	Communication about purpose and content is accurate and clear to students; it supports their active engagement in learning experiences and models effective use of language.	Communication about purpose and content is rich, nuanced, and relevant to students inviting them to think critically and contribute intellectually; it encourages curiosity and supports student autonomy.
Purpose for Learning and Criteria for Success			
The teacher does not convey to students what they will be learning.	The teacher partially explains the purpose of learning but with little elaboration or specificity.	The teacher clearly explains what students will be learning and why, how it is situated within broader purposes, how they will learn it, and what success will look like.	Students are able to explain the purpose and value of what they are learning and connect it to broader purposes, both within the curriculum and their own lives.
Specific Expectations			
The teacher's unclear or incomplete explanation of the learning activities hinders student engagement.	Expectations for the learning activities are somewhat clear to students.	The teacher clearly explains and models, if appropriate, the learning activities, consistently supporting and reinforcing student engagement.	The teacher and students anticipate and address possible challenges within the learning activities; students use or suggest other strategies, approaches, or processes for learning.
Explanations of Content			
The teacher makes significant content errors or fails to provide clear explanations, affecting student understanding of the content.	The teacher makes minor content errors or provides explanations of the content that are somewhat confusing and only invite minimal participation or engagement by students.	The teacher's explanations of content are accurate, appropriately scaffolded, and relevant to the experiences of students; content is explained in multiple, engaging ways to support conceptual understanding.	Students discuss and explain content clearly and precisely; their communication about content and its application demonstrate critical thinking, curiosity, and understanding of its purpose and relevance.
Use of Academic Language			
The teacher's communications include incorrect or imprecise use of academic language.	The teacher's use of academic language is generally correct but may need further explanation or be too simplistic to support student learning.	The teacher's content-specific language and vocabulary are accurate, academically rigorous, and well-suited to students and lessons, providing a model to support student development.	Rich and rigorous language and vocabulary are consistently and effectively used by the teacher and students.

3b USING QUESTIONING AND DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES

Questioning and discussion, when used effectively during learning experiences, engage students in the exploration of content and deepen student understanding. Before teachers have mastered the skill of questioning and discussion, the questions they ask are often quick, low-level questions with one right answer that only elicit responses from a few students or lead to discussions between the teacher and one student at a time. Skillful teachers frame questions that have multiple answers and invite students to formulate hypotheses, make connections, or challenge previously held views. They are especially adept at valuing students' responses, building on them, and making use of their ideas to help students arrive at new understandings of complex material.

When a strong culture for learning and a respectful, safe environment are present, classroom discussions engage all students in important issues, provide opportunities for critical thinking, deepen and extend understanding, and promote the use of precise language. Discussions may be based on questions formulated by the teacher or the students. Through questioning and discussion during learning experiences, students are challenged to explain and justify their reasoning, citing specific text or other evidence, and are given opportunities to reflect on learning. Skills and dispositions related to critical thinking, logical reasoning, and reflection are critical to all disciplines and essential to student success in school and beyond.

In the most successful discussions, all students are engaged. A few students do not dominate the conversation, nor is it a back-and-forth between a teacher and students. Rather, all students are drawn into the conversation because members of the classroom community seek the perspective of all students, and all voices are heard. While successful teachers are adept at asking questions that lead to fruitful and purposeful discussions, they have also established routines, created safe spaces with their students, and taught and modeled skills that allow them to gradually move from the center to the side so students can maintain the momentum.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Critical Thinking and Deeper Learning

Questions and discussions require critical thinking, have multiple answers, and are used to deepen student understanding of content, themselves, and the larger world.

Reasoning and Reflection

Questions and discussions challenge students to reason, reflect on learning, justify their thinking, and generate ideas for future inquiry.

Student Participation

Students demonstrate curiosity and engage one another through questions and dialogue, challenging each other's thinking with respect and humility.

Considerations

- How do students demonstrate that questioning and discussion is helping them to think critically and deepen their understanding?
- How does questioning and discussion challenge students to justify their reasoning and reflect on their learning?
- In what ways do students respectfully and productively engage each other in dialogue?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Questioning and discussion are absent or do not support learning and development.	Questioning and discussion, primarily framed and led by the teacher, are used to support student learning and development.	Questioning and discussion, framed or led by the teacher and students, effectively support critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection.	Students intentionally use questioning and discussion to develop their own and others' thinking, reasoning skills, and habits of reflection.
Critical Thinking and Deeper Learning			
Questioning and discussion do not invite student thinking, are of low cognitive challenge, and often have a single correct response.	The teacher frames questions to promote critical thinking and deeper understanding but with uneven success.	Open-ended and higher-level questions and genuine discussions allow students to think critically and offer multiple perspectives, challenging them to deepen understanding.	Students initiate higher-order questions and extend discussions with confidence, applying and developing critical thinking, curiosity, and deeper understanding.
Reasoning and Reflection			
Questioning and discussion do not invite or require students to explain their thinking.	Questioning and discussion invite students to explain their thinking and reflect on their learning, but students are only somewhat successful at doing so.	Through questioning and discussion, students have the opportunity to reason, reflect on learning, and justify their thinking, and successfully do so.	Students use questions and discussions to challenge one another's thinking with respect and humility, successfully justify their reasoning, and collaboratively generate new ideas and lines of inquiry.
Student Participation			
Questions and discussions are between teacher and select students; students do not engage in dialogue with one another or ask each other questions.	The teacher calls on many students or invites them to respond directly to one another, but only some students answer or participate in the discussion.	The teacher successfully engages students in discussion; students actively participate and ask questions of one another.	Students formulate questions, initiate discussion, and assume responsibility for ensuring that all voices are heard.

3C ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LEARNING

Ultimately, teachers are responsible for the learning and development of students, which requires students' active, intellectual engagement in learning experiences. When teachers arrange for ambitious instruction with each of their students in mind and cultivate safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments, the conditions exist for this type of engagement to occur. As such, all other components of the Framework for Teaching contribute to this one, and many have referred to it as the "heart" of the Framework. This designation reinforces the fundamental principles and constructivist foundation of the Framework, especially the idea that it is the learner who does the learning.

True engagement is present when students are intellectually active and emotionally invested in learning important and challenging content, not simply when they are "busy" or "on task." The critical distinction between experiences in which students are compliant and those in which they are engaged is that in the latter, students are developing their understanding through rich learning experiences, collaboration and teamwork, and thinking and reflection. They are not simply completing an assignment or passively receiving content. When students engage at a deeper level, they are encouraged to be curious, supported to assume responsibility for their learning, and motivated to increase the challenge, complexity, and relevance of learning experiences themselves.

Successful teachers provide multiple ways for students to engage with the content and represent their ideas. Even so, engaging learning experiences typically have a discernible, coherent structure that teachers have carefully prepared. Tasks and activities provide cognitive challenge and students are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned. That is, the experience has closure, in which teachers encourage students to derive the important learning from the tasks, discussion, or materials. The best evidence of engagement is not what teachers are saying or doing (or even what they have planned) but what students are saying and doing as a result.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Rich Learning Experiences

Students demonstrate agency and critical thinking in completion of tasks and activities that require high levels of intellectual engagement.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Student collaboration is a key component of learning and engagement, and students take initiative to collaborate in new or unplanned ways that further their learning and make it more engaging and meaningful.

Use of Instructional Materials and Resources

Instructional materials and resources are used effectively to support intellectual engagement and deep learning of the content.

Opportunities for Thinking and Reflection

Individual lessons, activities, and tasks, as well as instructional pathways, have multiple and effective opportunities to think, reflect, and consolidate understanding.

Considerations

- How do students demonstrate agency in making learning tasks more engaging and meaningful?
- What are some ways that teachers ensure that student collaboration is utilized to deepen understanding and further learning?
- In what ways are instructional materials and resources used to support deep learning by all students?
- What evidence indicates that the lesson is structured to allow students multiple meaningful opportunities to think and consolidate understanding?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Learning experiences do not require active intellectual engagement by students.	Learning experiences partially engage students intellectually; the activities require students to do some thinking.	Learning experiences support curiosity and exploration and encourage higher-order thinking; students engage in multiple ways and represent their ideas and responses through multiple means.	Students take initiative to increase the challenge or complexity of learning experiences and make suggestions for modifications that increase meaning and relevance.
Rich Learning Experiences			
Tasks are inappropriate for students in the class, many students are not engaged in them, or they may only require recall or use a single approach.	Students are partially engaged in tasks that require thinking as opposed to only recall; some tasks have multiple correct responses or approaches.	All students engage in activities that support agency and require critical thinking; tasks require high levels of intellectual engagement and students explain their thinking.	Through choices provided by the teacher or their own initiative, students modify learning tasks to make them more meaningful or challenging.
Collaboration and Teamwork			
Students do not collaborate, they do not engage with one another effectively, and/or instructional groupings are inappropriate for the task.	Students collaborate during the lesson in ways that are mostly suitable to the activities and outcomes and partially support learning for each student; they work well together during group activities.	Student collaboration is a key component of learning and engagement in the class, instructional groupings are strategically arranged to support learning and engagement, and effective teamwork is explicitly taught and celebrated.	Students take initiative to collaborate in new or unplanned ways that further their learning; they actively serve as resources for one another and focus on making their learning more engaging and meaningful.
Use of Instructional Materials and Resources			
Instructional materials and resources are not used correctly or effectively by the students, are not supportive of their learning, and/or are not equitably available.	Instructional materials and resources are used by the students with some success to support learning, and students have equitable access to them.	Instructional materials and resources are used effectively to support intellectual engagement and deep learning of the content; they are varied and used to support equitable access to the content.	Students take initiative in using instructional materials and resources by adapting them appropriately for their own needs; they suggest modifications or additions to make them more relevant or challenging.
Opportunities for Thinking and Reflection			
The pace of the lesson is too slow or is rushed, or opportunities for thought and reflection are poorly implemented; students do not have time to reflect or consolidate understanding.	The pacing of the lesson provides opportunities for some thought and reflection, allowing students to engage and develop understanding.	The pacing of the lesson supports high levels of intellectual engagement and deeper learning; students have multiple and effective opportunities to think, reflect, and consolidate understanding.	Through opportunities provided by the teacher or their own initiative, students demonstrate autonomy and effective use of strategies for reflection; they are able to identify and advocate for their own need to engage in further processing or reflection in order to consolidate understanding and solidify new learning.

3d USING ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

While assessments of learning are essential and have often been more heavily emphasized by policymakers, teachers have long known that assessment for learning is a powerful and important tool. Assessment is an integral part of learning experiences themselves, not just a signal of the end of a lesson, unit, or course. Summative assessment has always been and will continue to be an important aspect of teaching, allowing teachers, students, and their families to know whether students have learned and progressed toward their goals. But when formative assessment is a key component of learning experiences, teachers and students are able to gauge whether they have learned the content or mastered skills, as well as where they are on the path to meeting their learning goals, making them ultimately more likely to be successful in achieving their purposes.

Assessment for learning provides essential feedback to students and teachers on successes and challenges. Successful teachers are constantly monitoring student progress, and also encouraging and supporting students to monitor their own understanding. In order for assessment during learning to provide useful feedback, there must be standards and criteria for success that are aligned to the goals and clear to students and those supporting them. Successful opportunities to assess learning, no matter their form (they may be formal or informal, planned or organic), allow teachers to determine the degree of understanding of every student in the class and for each student to monitor their own learning against clear standards and collaborative goals determined by both students and teachers.

In the most successful learning experiences, feedback comes from a variety of sources (including other students). It is specific, useful, timely, and focused on improvement or further learning. While it may prioritize addressing gaps or misunderstandings, it should also provide encouragement and identify strengths that students can leverage in this or future challenges.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Clear Standards for Success

Collaborative goals, the characteristics of high-quality work, and the criteria established as evidence of success are clear to students and those supporting them.

Monitoring Student Understanding

Teachers and students are constantly monitoring learning and making use of specific strategies to elicit evidence of understanding.

Timely, Constructive Feedback

High-quality feedback comes from many sources, including students; it is specific and focused on improvement.

Considerations

- In what ways do teachers establish and clearly communicate the standards for high-quality work?
- What evidence indicates that students monitor their own understanding to analyze their progress toward learning goals?
- How do students receive and utilize high quality feedback to advance their learning?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Formative assessment is not used during instruction or is not aligned to the instructional purpose of the lesson.	Formative assessment partially supports student learning and development.	The teacher and students use formative assessments to elicit evidence of understanding, analyze progress, and provide constructive feedback.	Students take initiative to analyze their own progress against a clear standard in order to achieve the outcome and identify new opportunities and challenges.
Clear Standards for Success			
The teacher does not share assessment criteria, describe what high-quality work looks like, or explain how students will know they are successful.	Students partially understand how they will know they are progressing successfully and how their work will be evaluated.	The standards of high-quality work and success are clear to students and provide the opportunity for self-assessment.	Students and those who support them have an active voice in establishing standards for success that are relevant and ambitious; they clearly understand how their progress is being assessed.
Monitoring Student Understanding			
The teacher does not determine whether students are progressing toward mastery of the goals and provides no structured opportunities for students to monitor their own progress.	The teacher's attempts to monitor student understanding and support self-assessment are limited or only partially effective.	The teacher uses questions and assessments to elicit accurate evidence of student understanding and models strategies for self-assessment, allowing students to successfully analyze their own progress toward goals.	Students take initiative to monitor their own understanding through planned tasks, assessments, and strategies of self-assessment to understand their progress, make adjustments, and identify new or alternative pathways and goals.
Timely, Constructive Feedback			
Students receive no feedback, or the only feedback given is global or for only a few students.	The teacher provides some feedback, but the feedback is unclear or not oriented toward improvement or mastery.	Students receive timely, constructive feedback from the teacher or others that advances learning.	Students make decisions and assume responsibility for their learning using high-quality, improvement-focused feedback from many sources.

3e RESPONDING FLEXIBLY TO STUDENT NEEDS

Teaching is an incredibly complex and demanding activity that requires ongoing, often consequential decision-making. In the course of learning experiences, teachers are making decisions almost constantly. These decisions might include whether to shift approach (or not) based on evidence of student engagement; how to respond to and build upon student inquiries; what to do when one, some, or all students are struggling; and how to acknowledge students' emotional wellbeing or respond to events in their lives, communities, or the broader society. While some of these decisions might be made in advance, successful teachers are particularly skilled in making adjustments during the course of learning experiences in response to changing conditions.

With experience, teachers develop skills in accurately predicting how a lesson will go and being prepared for different possible scenarios. However, even the most skilled, and best prepared, teachers will occasionally find either that a lesson is not proceeding as they would like or that students are encountering unanticipated difficulties. Additionally, student inquiries or unanticipated events might create new and unexpected learning opportunities that are worth pursuing in the moment. In either case, successful teachers are able to make both minor and (at times) major adjustments to better address the needs of students and ensure their success. Such adjustments are supported by teachers' expertise, confidence, and sense of efficacy.

When teachers demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness, they also model mindsets and skills for their students. For instance, committed teachers don't give up easily. Their determination and persistence in supporting students who encounter difficulties or experience failure has a direct impact on students' own mindsets and the culture for learning in the classroom. A learning experience, even one that goes according to plan, will include moments of struggle, and the determination of students and teachers and the adjustments they make during those times further their success.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Evidence-Based Adjustments

When appropriate, teachers use their expertise to alter or replace pre-planned activities based on students' understanding, questions, and interests.

Receptiveness and Responsiveness

Teachers are open to and capitalize upon unexpected student actions, questions, and internal and external events; they encourage and support students to pursue new learning and opportunities on their own.

Determination and Persistence

Teachers are committed to efficacy, even when students encounter difficulty in learning, and pursue alternative approaches when necessary to help students be successful.

Considerations

- What evidence indicates that teachers make real-time adjustments to learning activities to suit students' individual needs?
- In what ways do teachers incorporate students' questions and interests into the learning experience to deepen understanding and support curiosity?
- What are some ways that teachers and students demonstrate a commitment to success when they experience difficulties?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher makes no adjustments to learning experiences, even when warranted, and is not responsive to student needs.	The teacher makes some adjustments to learning experiences and is responsive to student needs with partial success.	The teacher's adjustments and responsiveness lead to deeper understanding for students and/or new learning experiences.	Based on self-monitoring and reflection, students voice their needs, ask questions, and make suggestions that lead to adjustments and modifications or spark new learning opportunities.
Evidence-Based Adjustments			
The teacher does not recognize, or ignores, evidence of low engagement or lack of student understanding.	The teacher attempts to adjust learning experiences based on evidence but is only partially successful.	The teacher effectively adjusts learning experiences based on real-time evidence and students' individual and specific needs.	Students voice their needs and assume responsibility for their own learning by making necessary adjustments to the learning experiences with the support and encouragement of the teacher.
Receptiveness and Responsiveness			
The teacher brushes aside or does not fully address students' questions or difficulties.	The teacher attempts to incorporate students' questions and respond to their interests but only minimally or with limited success.	The teacher incorporates students' interests and questions into learning experiences to deepen understanding and encourage curiosity and autonomy.	Students identify new learning opportunities and take the initiative to pursue them on their own, with their peers, or with the support of the teacher or others in the school and beyond.
Determination and Persistence			
The teacher does not convey a level of responsibility for student learning and success or is uncertain about how to assist students.	The teacher conveys responsibility and commitment to efficacy but lacks certainty or is only partially successful in responding to student difficulties.	Drawing on a broad repertoire of strategies, the teacher persists in seeking alternative approaches and pathways when students experience difficulty.	Students demonstrate determination and persistence when they experience difficulties; they seek and receive effective support from the teacher and others.

DOMAIN 4

PRINCIPLED TEACHING

DOMAIN 4

PRINCIPLED TEACHING

The components of Domain 4: Principled Teaching capture and reflect the practices of educators that extend beyond their classrooms and the learning experiences they facilitate. These activities are critical to preserving and enhancing the profession and to the success of students. Teaching is a purpose-driven profession. It is a calling. Those who take up the work have a lasting and profound impact on the lives of students. Their purpose, and the purpose of education more broadly, is not solely to impart academic knowledge; it is the intellectual and moral development of human beings who will themselves flourish and help create a just society.

Dedication to this work is revealed through a teacher's ongoing, deliberate process of growth and evolution, their contributions to the school community, and their ongoing partnerships with the families and communities with whom they work. Their actions in these areas are directly connected to the components in other domains, such as knowing and valuing their students and providing safe and supportive environments that promote each student's learning and personal development.

For teachers, success relies on an ability to reflect, recognize, and analyze strengths and opportunities. More importantly, the collective impact of teachers depends on their ability and



desire to learn and grow, their resilience and determination, and the strength of their character. They ultimately measure their success by the success of students - each one - and especially the success of those whose identities and potential have not yet been affirmed or realized in schools.

Like students (and all human beings), teachers are on a journey of personal development and discovery. This journey is fueled by curiosity and compassion; it requires creativity, resourcefulness, humility, leadership, and wisdom. As it relates to the work of teaching, this journey centers around students, their lives, their families, and their purpose.

The components in this domain emphasize what it means to be a full member of the teaching profession, to serve students, and to be dedicated to the collective values and goals of the school and the community it serves. Teachers who excel in Domain 4: Principled Teaching are highly regarded by colleagues and parents. They serve students' best interests and those of the larger community, and they are active in professional organizations in school, the district, and beyond. They are known as dependable educators who go beyond the technical requirements of their jobs and contribute to the general well-being of the institutions of which they are a part, which sometimes means they question and work to change those institutions.

At its best and at its core, teaching is an act of service and moral leadership rooted in an ethic of care and focused on the success of each and every student.

DOMAIN 4 COMPONENTS

4a Engaging in Reflective Practice

4b Documenting Student Progress

4c Engaging Families and Communities

4d Contributing to School Community and Culture

4e Growing and Developing Professionally

4f Acting in Service of Students



THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

DOMAIN 4

PRINCIPLED TEACHING

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4a Engaging in Reflective Practice	The teacher does not appear to engage in reflective practice or misjudges the success of instruction.	The teacher's reflective practice leads to some accurate assessment of student success of instruction but does not follow through with analysis and changes to practice.	The teacher's reflective practice, based on consideration of evidence of student learning and development, leads to an accurate assessment of the success of instruction and results in specific changes and adjustments.	The teacher consistently engages in reflective practice based on multiple sources of evidence that results in the exploration of new ideas and approaches focused on supporting students who need it most.
4b Documenting Student Progress	There is no system for documenting student progress or the system is ineffective at communicating progress to students and families.	The teacher documents some aspects of student progress, in a manner that is accessible to students and families.	The teacher documents student progress toward mastery, focusing on the attainment of learning and developmental goals; students have access to and engage in reflection on their progress.	Students monitor progress toward mastery and their own attainment of learning and development goals; they regularly analyze and discuss their progress with the teacher and their families.
4c Engaging Families and Communities	The teacher does not engage students' families or the community, engages them infrequently, or does so disrespectfully.	The teacher makes some efforts to engage families and communities and does so in a respectful manner.	The teacher engages students' families and communities in a respectful and culturally responsive manner, making information readily available and inviting participation in the intellectual life of the classroom.	The teacher's frequent and ongoing engagement of families and communities demonstrates a clear value for the role they play in student learning and is focused on forging partnerships that further the academic and personal success of each and every student.
4d Contributing to School Community and Culture	The teacher is not an active member of the school community or contributes negatively to the culture of learning and values of the school.	The teacher makes some contributions to the school culture, supporting professional learning and upholding the values of the school.	The teacher takes initiative in contributing to and leading events, programs, or activities that further the culture of learning in the school and brings the values of the school to life through modeling and positive action.	The teacher takes a leadership role in defining, modeling, and holding self and peers accountable to the values and intellectual life of the school, leading with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students and families.
4e Growing and Developing Professionally	The teacher does not engage in professional inquiry or learning focused on developing knowledge, skills, and mindsets, or does so reluctantly.	The teacher engages in professional inquiry and learning focused on developing knowledge, skills, and mindsets individually and with colleagues that is typically arranged or directed by others.	The teacher directs their own professional inquiry and learning in collaboration with colleagues and demonstrates curiosity and energy for professional conversations and growth focused on developing knowledge, skills, and mindsets.	The teacher appropriately exercises autonomy to direct professional learning for themselves and their peers, taking a leadership role in the school, setting direction, and supporting colleagues to engage in inquiry and innovation.
4f Acting in Service of Students	The teacher acts unethically and does not understand the needs of students or make decisions in their best interest.	The teacher acts ethically and attempts to make deliberate decisions in the best interest of students, families, and colleagues.	The teacher models high standards of ethical practice and wise decision-making on behalf of students, families, and colleagues.	The teacher is a leader in the school in defining and upholding high standards of ethical practice and modeling wise decision-making that honors the inherent worth and dignity of each and every student and prioritizes their needs.

4a ENGAGING IN REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

The ability to engage in reflective practice that leads to professional growth and student success is an essential aspect of teaching. While teachers often reflect on and analyze a single learning experience (or series of them), they also engage in self-assessment and reflection more generally about their practice. Reflection is a process of thinking, reviewing, looking at evidence, identifying strengths and opportunities, and seeking new knowledge and new perspectives that can enhance practice.

Teachers who engage successfully in reflection focus on their impact on student learning. This includes attention not only to the specific events or activities that occur during learning but also to their own beliefs, mindsets, and aspects of their own identities that may influence the experience of students. By analyzing results of student assessments, examining a lesson they record, receiving feedback from colleagues, or by a variety of other means, teachers work to determine where to focus their efforts in making adjustments, learn from their challenges, and build on their successes. Reflection may occur in conversation with colleagues, by keeping a journal or written record of reflections, and by engaging in the process of thinking about - and acting on - what they observe and are able to learn on their own.

Reflection is a habit and mindset that teachers use in a variety of contexts, including their personal lives. It's a disposition that they also work to encourage and build in students. That said, reflection on teaching is a process that teachers acquire and develop over time. Reflecting with accuracy and specificity, and being able to apply new learning to future interactions, is a skill that should be supported by mentors, coaches, instructional leaders, and colleagues. Over time, reflective practice becomes a habit of mind, a way of thinking critically about and analyzing teaching through the lens of student success leading to improvements in teaching and better outcomes for students.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Self-Assessment of Teaching

Teachers use evidence from activities and assessments to identify the impact of different elements of practice on student learning and evaluate the success of learning experiences.

Analysis and Discovery

Based on their self-assessment, teachers consider alternative approaches or perspectives, question their own ideas or beliefs, and learn new ways to further advance student learning.

Application and Continuous Improvement

Teachers demonstrate commitment to the success of all students by planning, practicing, and trying new approaches to enhance their teaching based on their assessment and analysis.

Considerations

- How do teachers utilize multiple sources of evidence to analyze their practice and the effectiveness of their instruction?
- What evidence indicates that teachers utilize the results of self-assessment to guide the purposeful acquisition of new knowledge and skills?
- In what ways do teachers utilize self-reflection and new ideas to demonstrate a personal commitment to continuous improvement?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher does not appear to engage in reflective practice, does not know whether students achieved the outcomes, or misjudges the success of instruction.	The teacher's reflective practice leads to some accurate assessment of student success of instruction but does not follow through with analysis and changes to practice.	The teacher's reflective practice, based on consideration of evidence of student learning and development, leads to an accurate assessment of the success of instruction and results in specific changes and adjustments.	The teacher consistently engages in reflective practice that leads to a thorough and accurate assessment of the success of instruction, exploration of new ideas and approaches, and ongoing changes to practices and mindsets focused on supporting students who need it most.
Self-Assessment of Teaching			
The teacher does not reflect on experiences or draws inaccurate or incomplete conclusions about their success.	The teacher has a partially accurate but incomplete sense about whether or not instructional practices were successful or had the desired impact on student learning and development.	The teacher draws on evidence from the lesson, including student work, to assess the effectiveness of specific elements of instruction and their impact on student learning and development.	The teacher's assessment of the lesson is based on multiple sources of evidence, leads to a thoughtful and accurate analysis of practice, and addresses the specific impact of the design or execution of elements of instruction on student learning and development.
Analysis and Discovery			
The teacher does not or is unable to analyze their impact on student success and/or makes no suggestions for growth or improvement.	The teacher analyzes some aspects of their practice but may not consider alternative approaches, recognize the impact of their own mindsets or beliefs, and/or be willing to explore new strategies or ideas.	The teacher analyzes the impact of their own actions and beliefs on student learning, learns about alternative perspectives and approaches, and begins to build new knowledge and skills that enhance learning.	The teacher critically analyzes the impact of practices, values, and beliefs on student learning and consistently focuses on acquiring new knowledge and skills to enhance learning, prioritizing improvement for students who need it the most.
Application and Continuous Improvement			
The teacher does not plan for or consider opportunities to improve practice.	Based on reflection, the teacher has some plans for future action that will better support student learning and development.	Based on reflection, the teacher considers multiple paths forward; communicates a commitment to the success of all students; and plans, practices, and implements improvements.	Based on reflection, the teacher focuses on the best course of action for student success, demonstrates perseverance in the face of challenges, implements new ideas and strategies and continues to reflect on and analyze the results.

4b DOCUMENTING STUDENT PROGRESS

While effective teachers keep detailed records of completion of assignments, grades on assessments, or even daily participation or notes about the well-being of students, they also focus their documentation of student progress on just that—where students are in relation to their goals, which may or may not be readily apparent from their grades. Importantly, this information about where each student “is” in their learning trajectory must be accessible to and understood by students themselves and those who support them: their families, caregivers, and other educators.

Simply giving access to an online grading system or sending home progress reports is not sufficient to build shared ownership of student progress. Successful teachers engage students themselves and their families in setting goals, tracking progress toward them, and celebrating their attainment. In many cases, teachers do important work to ensure that students and their families fully understand what different grades, scores, or designations mean. For instance, designations such as “below grade level” or more specific ways of documenting reading level may be generally understood by students, but it’s essential that teachers share more than just this basic information and do so in a way that affirms students rather than operating from a deficit mindset.

True success in this component occurs when students are fully able to describe their own progress in detail—not just to the teacher but to their families as well. They take ownership of and demonstrate pride in their accomplishments. They also recognize and learn from their failures or challenges. Ultimately, they assume responsibility for their progress with the teacher serving as their guide.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Student Progress Toward Mastery

The teacher documents student progress toward learning and developmental goals and shares information with students, parents, and educational collaborators.

Shared Ownership

With support from teachers, students utilize resources to monitor their progress toward learning and developmental goals and regularly analyze and discuss their progress with teachers and caregivers.

Maintaining Reliable Records

The teacher consistently gathers, updates, and shares data that is accurate, accessible, and clear to students and families.

Considerations

- What evidence indicates that there is a clear system used by students and teachers to track mastery of learning goals?
- How do teachers, students, and those that support them share responsibility and ownership of student progress?
- In what ways do teachers ensure that records are created and maintained in a reliable, accurate, and accessible fashion?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
There is no system for documenting student progress, the system is ineffective and inefficient, or it does not provide relevant information to students and those who support them.	The teacher documents some aspects of student progress in a manner that is accessible to students and those who support them.	The teacher documents and celebrates student progress toward mastery, focusing on the attainment of learning and developmental goals; students and those who support them engage in reflection on their progress.	Students monitor progress toward mastery and their own attainment of learning and development goals; they analyze and discuss their progress with the teacher and those who support them.
Student Progress Toward Mastery			
The teacher does not adequately track student progress or the approach is not focused on mastery or aligned to goals.	The teacher tracks student progress toward mastery but it is not comprehensive or may not be useful to students and those who support them.	There is a clear system for tracking progress toward mastery and the teacher communicates understandable and useful information to students and those who support them.	Students are consistently aware of their own progress toward mastery of their goals; they are able to identify, reflect on, and discuss their strengths and needs based on clear evidence of progress.
Shared Ownership			
The teacher does not engage students or those who support them in setting, understanding, or monitoring progress toward goals.	The teacher makes attempts to engage students and those who support them in identifying goals and monitoring progress toward them, with partial success.	The teacher engages students and those who support them in setting and monitoring their progress toward their goals; students play an active role in analyzing and celebrating their success.	Students and those who support them are engaged as full partners in setting goals, monitoring progress, and evaluating and celebrating success.
Maintaining Reliable Records			
The teacher does not have systems for tracking student learning or other records, or the systems are inaccurate, confusing, or inaccessible.	The teacher has systems for tracking student learning and other records that are accessible to students and those who support them, but they are partially inaccurate or may not be comprehensive.	The teacher has accurate and accessible systems for tracking student learning and other records; they use these systems efficiently and effectively.	The teacher's systems are consistently accurate and effective; as appropriate, students contribute information and participate in maintaining reliable evidence of their learning and other records.

4C ENGAGING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Successful teachers recognize that their success, which comes from their students' success, requires the engagement of families and the communities in which they work. Schools have too often, though certainly not always, been seen as separate from the families and communities they serve. Deficit notions of families and communities have too often done harm to students and hindered their success. Certainly, students' families rely on the school and teachers in it to meet their students' needs and help them achieve their individual goals and purposes, and their levels of engagement may vary for a host of different reasons. However, it is essential that teachers operate with a mindset that views families and other members of the community as co-teachers, partners, and resources.

Understanding the cultural backgrounds and values of students and their families is essential, especially when there is a difference between those values or cultures and a teacher's own. When families feel unwelcome or excluded from the learning community, when their students do not receive the support they need, or when their cultures and identities are viewed as deficits rather than assets, success for each student is not possible. Teachers who respectfully and fully engage families and the community in ways that value and honor their humanity and create a shared commitment to student success are engaging in efforts that can have lasting effects and far-reaching influence.

There are many ways to engage families and various purposes for that engagement. Effective teachers partner with families in creating learning environments and building a community of learners. They ensure that families know about and understand the instructional program. They invite parents to engage in learning experiences. Ultimately, they make families part of the learning community and view their partnership as essential to meeting the needs of their students.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Respect and Cultural Competence

Teachers interact with families and the community in ways that respect their values and cultural backgrounds.

Community Values

Learning experiences and environments are extensions of the community and uphold its values, creating a shared vision of student success.

Instructional Program

Established structures and processes keep families informed about the instructional program and provide opportunities for input and feedback.

Engagement in Learning Experiences

Teachers connect students' out-of-school learning and lives to their efforts in school and take the lead in forming partnerships and relationships to strengthen those connections.

Considerations

- In what ways do teacher interactions demonstrate their respect for the values of students' families and local community?
- How is the vision for student success shaped and informed by the values of the community?
- What evidence indicates that structures are in place and consistently utilized to keep families informed and collect their input and feedback?
- How do teachers connect to students' lived experiences to tailor and deepen engagement in learning experiences?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher does not engage students' families or the community, engages them infrequently, or does so disrespectfully.	The teacher makes some efforts to engage families and communities and does so in a respectful manner.	The teacher engages students' families and communities in a respectful and culturally responsive manner, making information readily available and inviting participation in the intellectual life of the classroom.	The teacher's frequent and ongoing engagement of families and communities demonstrates a clear value for the role they play in student learning and is focused on forging partnerships that further the academic and personal success of each and every student.
Respect and Cultural Competence			
The teacher is unable to engage families or does so in ways that are disrespectful or demonstrate bias.	The teacher's efforts to engage families and communities are respectful and demonstrate some cultural awareness and a commitment to learn more.	The teacher engages families and communities with respect and cultural awareness, learning and affirming their values and cultural backgrounds.	The teacher, students, and families partner together to support student success in a manner that honors the contributions of all and focuses on meeting the needs of students.
Community Values			
The teacher does not take the values of families into account when planning learning experiences or designing learning environments.	The teacher makes some efforts to engage families and communities in contributing to the ethos and values of the learning community.	The teacher engages families in co-creating elements of the learning community that reflect the values of the larger community.	The teacher, students, and families partner together to establish a learning community that honors the ethos and values of all members.
Instructional Program			
Little or no information about the standards, curriculum, or learning expectations is available to parents.	The teacher shares basic information about the standards, curriculum, or learning expectations; the information is limited, inaccessible, or incomplete.	The teacher frequently shares accessible, informative updates about the standards, curriculum, and/or learning expectations and seeks input from families.	The teacher partners with families to ensure that everyone who supports students understands the instructional program and has opportunities to engage thoughtfully in its development.
Engagement in Learning Experiences			
The teacher provides no opportunities for families to engage in learning experiences with students.	The teacher invites families to engage in learning experiences with students but with limited success.	The teacher includes families/caregivers in learning experiences by creating opportunities for them to support students and engage in the learning community.	The teacher views and incorporates families as essential partners in learning experiences.

4d CONTRIBUTING TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Schools are, first and foremost, environments to promote the learning and development of students. In order for a school's vision of success for students to be achieved, teachers must work collaboratively and engage together in inquiry regarding effective practice. Their efficacy as a community is essential for the success of the school as a whole and that of individual students. The full potential of a school community is realized only when teachers regard themselves as members of and leaders in a learning organization. This type of community is characterized by mutual support and respect, as well as by the recognition that all teachers have the responsibility to seek ways to improve their practice and contribute to the life and values of the school.

A key component of the intellectual life of the school is collaborative inquiry. By identifying problems of practice, student needs, and areas of investigation, teachers are able to support one another, develop solutions, and engage in innovation that leads to student success. Through an ongoing process focused on improvement, teachers observe one another and provide feedback, participate in professional learning communities, study curricular materials together, and analyze student outcomes and assessment data across the school. When collaborative inquiry is implemented successfully, teachers solve problems and grow collectively in their pursuit of excellence.

Inevitably, teachers' involvement in and contributions to the community and culture of the school also extend beyond what might typically be considered their instructional practice. These contributions have an important impact on the life of the school and include activities such as parent-teacher organizations, school or district committees, and school social or cultural events. While each teacher's contributions may differ (as may school or district expectations), successful educators are committed to enhancing the culture of the entire school.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Relational Trust and Collaborative Spirit

Teachers develop strong relationships with students and colleagues that support professional learning, collaboration, mutual trust, and student success.

Culture of Inquiry and Innovation

Teachers contribute to the culture of the school by modeling school values, helping to identify underlying problems, and taking positive action toward their solution.

Service to the School

Teachers extend their influence beyond their classrooms by leading and contributing to school events, projects, and initiatives.

Considerations

- What evidence indicates that teachers have developed strong relationships that build relational trust with students and colleagues?
- In what ways do teachers model a culture of thoughtful, generative professional inquiry?
- What are some ways that teachers lead in developing and implementing school events, projects, and initiatives for students and colleagues?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher is not an active member of the school community or contributes negatively to the culture of learning and values of the school.	The teacher makes modest contributions to the school culture, supporting professional learning and upholding the values of the school.	The teacher takes initiative in contributing to and leading events, programs, or activities that further the culture of learning in the school and bring the values of the school to life through modeling and positive action.	The teacher takes a leadership role in defining, modeling, and holding self and peers accountable to the values and intellectual life of the school, leading with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students and families.
Relational Trust and Collaborative Spirit			
The teacher's relationships with colleagues are characterized by negativity or combativeness.	The teacher has cordial relationships with colleagues but may not have established many trusting or collaborative relationships with colleagues.	The teacher has supportive and collaborative relationships with colleagues that are built on mutual respect and trust.	The teacher actively builds relational trust with colleagues and models collaboration focused on student success.
Culture of Inquiry and Innovation			
The teacher avoids activities promoting professional inquiry or only participates when required, making few or negative contributions.	The teacher participates in professional inquiry with colleagues when invited to do so and occasionally contributes to their success.	The teacher regularly and actively participates in and contributes thoughtfully to professional inquiry.	The teacher takes a leadership role in promoting and ensuring the success of professional inquiry, modeling and supporting a culture of inquiry across the school.
Service to the School			
The teacher avoids involvement in school events, projects, and initiatives.	The teacher participates in school events, projects, and initiatives as expected.	The teacher makes a substantial contribution to school events, projects, and initiatives.	The teacher takes a leadership role in events, projects, and initiatives that contribute to the overall success of the school.

4e GROWING AND DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALLY

As is the case in other professions, the complexity of teaching requires continuous growth and development. By continuing to stay informed, enhancing their skills, and further developing their cultural competence, teachers become ever more effective and grow as leaders in their schools. Successful teachers approach growth and development with a spirit of curiosity—seeking to learn more about their disciplines as knowledge evolves, refining their skills around student engagement, and learning the newest strategies and technology, among other things. They also continuously seek to develop their understanding of the students and communities they serve.

Engaging in collaborative inquiry with colleagues is one key practice that supports growth and development. This engagement may occur through department or team meetings, study groups, lesson study, or other structures. In addition, educators increase their effectiveness in the classroom by participating in opportunities for learning through professional organizations, online courses, educational conferences, or formally continuing their education through university coursework.

Those who have experienced its power recognize that instructional coaching and mentoring are fundamental components of professional growth and development. When teachers seek and act on advice and feedback, they are able to refine their own knowledge and skills, become more adept at reflecting on their own practice, and ultimately are better able to meet the needs of their students. Feedback, whether formal or informal, is essential in understanding and analyzing classroom success and opportunities for improvement. As they gain more experience and expertise through practices such as collaborative inquiry and instructional coaching, successful teachers find additional ways to contribute to the success of their colleagues by taking on leadership roles.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Curiosity and Autonomy

Teachers identify personal and professional growth areas and independently seek opportunities to develop and refine their knowledge.

Developing Cultural Competence

Teachers seek knowledge regarding the students and community they serve and apply findings to their practice and development of the school culture.

Enhancing Knowledge and Skills

Teachers work to deepen content and pedagogical knowledge and exchange new learning with colleagues.

Seeking and Acting on Feedback

Teachers seek opportunities to receive and provide feedback and work collaboratively and constructively to utilize feedback effectively.

Considerations

- What evidence indicates that teachers respect cultural differences and work to develop and demonstrate cultural competence?
- How do teachers identify opportunities for growth to help them better meet the needs of students?
- In what ways do teachers demonstrate initiative toward refining their skills and content knowledge?
- What are some ways that teachers show a commitment to seeking and utilizing high-quality feedback?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher does not engage in professional inquiry or learning focused on developing knowledge, skills, and mindsets, or does so reluctantly.	The teacher engages in professional inquiry and learning focused on developing knowledge, skills, and mindsets individually and with colleagues that is often determined or directed by others.	The teacher directs their own professional inquiry and learning in collaboration with colleagues and demonstrates curiosity and energy for professional conversations and growth focused on developing knowledge, skills, and mindsets.	The teacher appropriately exercises autonomy to direct professional learning for themselves and their colleagues, taking a leadership role in the school, setting direction, and supporting colleagues to engage in inquiry and innovation.
Curiosity and Autonomy			
The teacher demonstrates little or no interest in professional learning and takes no initiative to improve.	The teacher engages in recommended and available professional learning opportunities and takes some initiative in seeking additional opportunities for professional growth.	The teacher regularly seeks out and identifies high-quality opportunities to grow and learn, identifying problems of practice or areas of inquiry that inform individual and collaborative learning opportunities.	The teacher takes a leadership role in the school, directing their own and others' learning as appropriate based on an inquiry-driven approach that prioritizes the needs of students.
Developing Cultural Competence			
The teacher demonstrates little or no cultural knowledge or awareness and/or assigns negative value to cultural differences.	The teacher has some cultural knowledge, is developing understanding of the values and beliefs of other cultures, and is beginning to engage in the reflective work necessary to become more culturally competent.	The teacher accepts and respects cultural differences and actively seeks to understand the influence of culture, bias, and inequities on students' success.	The teacher demonstrates cultural competence, is continually assessing and developing their own knowledge and skills, and leads others in the school community to develop new approaches that value differences and address inequities.
Enhancing Knowledge and Skills			
The teacher does not stay current on content and pedagogical knowledge.	The teacher engages in activities designed specifically strengthen content and pedagogical knowledge and deeper understanding of curriculum.	The teacher takes initiative in deepening content knowledge and understanding the curriculum individually and in collaboration with colleagues.	The teacher is an expert and leader in understanding and continuously improving and refining their knowledge of content, pedagogy, and curriculum.
Seeking and Acting on Feedback			
The teacher resists discussing feedback on their practice or ignores feedback that is given.	The teacher invites, accepts, and acts on feedback given by colleagues.	The teacher invites feedback from colleagues, plays an active role in the analysis of practice, and works collaboratively to understand and act on feedback.	The teacher takes a leadership role in the school in supporting a culture of growth and modeling a process for seeking, providing, and acting on feedback.

4f ACTING IN SERVICE OF STUDENTS

Accomplished teachers demonstrate a commitment to the success of all students by acting ethically and taking deliberate action on their behalf. They have a strong moral compass and are guided by the best interest of each student. They display this commitment in a number of ways. For example, they conduct interactions with colleagues in a manner notable for honesty and integrity. Furthermore, they know their students' needs and can readily access resources that may extend beyond the classroom. Seeking greater flexibility in how school rules and policies are applied, expert teachers advocate for their students in ways that might challenge traditional views and the educational establishment when current policies or procedures are out of line with community values or have not served students equitably.

Promoting excellence means not only that teachers focus on best practices and their ongoing learning and development, it also means that they recognize and call attention to practices that are not supportive of learning and development for any student. When even one student feels unsafe or excluded from the learning community, does not have the support they need to meet the outcomes, feels their self-confidence shaken or their love of learning stifled, excellent teachers work to address these issues and make excellence possible for each student. They view the cultures and identities of students as assets rather than deficits and hold high expectations for them all. They act out of a firm commitment to the idea that excellence only for some is not excellence at all.

In many ways, distinguished practice in all of the previous components of the Framework for Teaching is the best evidence of distinguished practice in this component. Ultimately, it reflects the ideal that teaching is work that matters. It requires critical thinking, curiosity, courage, autonomy, resourcefulness, gratitude, and compassion. Above all it requires the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of students, especially in challenging situations.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Acting with Care, Honesty, and Integrity

Teachers consistently model care, honesty, and integrity in interactions with students, families, and colleagues.

Ethical Decision-Making

Teachers make wise decisions, especially under challenging circumstances, that are in the best interest of students and their families.

Advocacy

Teachers are active advocates for students, their families, and colleagues and lead in taking action on their behalf.

Considerations

- What evidence indicates that teachers model care, honesty, and integrity and take the lead in developing and encouraging others to develop these qualities?
- In what ways do teachers ensure that the decisions they make are in the best interest of students, families, and colleagues?
- How do teachers model and take the lead in advocating for students, families, and colleagues?

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
The teacher acts unethically and does not understand the needs of students or make decisions in their best interest.	The teacher acts ethically and attempts to make deliberate decisions in the best interest of students, families, and colleagues.	The teacher models high standards of ethical practice and wise decision making on behalf of students, families, and colleagues.	The teacher is a leader in the school in defining and upholding high standards of ethical practice and modeling wise decision-making that honors the inherent worth and dignity of each and every student and prioritizes their needs.
Acting with Care, Honesty, and Integrity			
The teacher's actions are uncaring or dishonest.	The teacher acts honestly and with care and integrity.	The teacher is known for and looked to as a model of care, honesty, and integrity.	The teacher is a leader in the school in modeling and upholding care, honesty, and integrity, and encourages students and teachers to seek opportunities to develop these qualities.
Ethical Decision-Making			
The teacher makes unwise, rushed, or heated decisions or makes decisions that are self-serving.	The teacher seeks to make wise, discerning decisions in the best interest of students and engages other stakeholders in these decisions whenever possible or practical.	The teacher makes wise, discerning decisions in the best interest of students even under challenging circumstances or when priorities or values collide.	The teacher is a leader in the school in modeling and upholding wise decision making that is in the best interest of students, families, and colleagues, and supports students and colleagues to develop their capacity to be more discerning.
Advocacy			
The teacher fails to act on behalf of students when deliberate action is warranted.	The teacher addresses the needs of students through their actions but may do so inconsistently or with partial success.	The teacher is an advocate for all students in and beyond the classroom, taking deliberate action on their behalf that aligns with the school's and community's values, even when it may not be popular or comply with policy.	The teacher serves as a model of advocacy for students and acts as a leader in the school, identifying and working to change policies and practices that do not align with community values or may cause harm to students.