

T E N N E S S E E FIRST TO THE TOP



National Institute for
Excellence in Teaching®

Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) Evaluation System Handbook

ROLE OF THE EVALUATION SYSTEM HANDBOOK

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) provides detailed trainings and workshops designed for schools or districts implementing an evaluation process in addition to evaluation materials and tools through an online resource, which is available to all teachers.

The NIET *Evaluation System Handbook* is a compilation of procedures, rubrics, and detailed explanations, along with all the necessary forms and documents needed in the evaluation process. These documents are based on the TAP Teaching Standards and provide schools with a framework and instruments to implement an effective observation process as part of their accountability system.

The TAP qualitative observation process and tools to be used in the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) have been used for over 10 years as part of TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement. Research has shown a significant correlation between observation scores using the TAP Rubric and student growth using quantitative measures. For additional information about TAP, please visit www.tapsystem.org.

We encourage you to use this *Evaluation System Handbook* as a resource as you pursue your goal of teacher excellence.

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OVERVIEW: TENNESSEE EDUCATOR ACCELERATION MODEL

Theory of Action – Educator Observation

The Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) will shed light on educator practices and relevant student outcomes, while also facilitating a process for analysis and continuous improvement.

Observation and Support

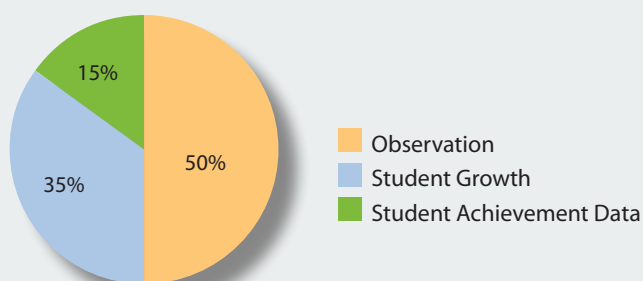
Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, all certified educators will receive annual observations as required under Tennessee's First to the Top Act. The state's new system will include multiple measures for looking at performance and will provide a way to individualize both support and recognition for educators. Furthermore, like the reflective practices this new system will promote for educators, the state is committed to reflecting on and refining the new observation system through feedback loops and careful study during year one and over time.

Over the course of the coming months and years, the state will continue to provide information as we develop additional guidelines. We will hold information sessions, send emails to teachers and administrators with updates, and will keep updated information on our website.

What are the “multiple measures” in TEAM?

Educator observations will be made up of three components: 50% will be observation data; 35% will be a student growth score; and 15% will be student achievement data selected by the educator and his/her supervisor from a list of state board approved options.

Educator Evaluation Breakdown



How is the 35% growth determined?

All educators who teach grades and subjects for which there is a state assessment will use their individual TVAAS teacher effect data for the 35% component.

For educators in non-tested areas, the Department of Education, in consultation with groups of non-tested Tennessee educators and observation experts, is working to provide subject-specific growth measures for non-TCAP subjects and grade levels. Some non-tested areas will have measures available for the coming school year, and others for the 2012-13 school year. While additional assessments are under development and review, school-

wide value-added (TVAAS) data will be used for the 35%. In all cases, we are committed to providing timely communication and information about the options.

For teachers in special school or instructional situations (e.g. instructors teaching in multiple schools), careful work is under way in consultation with educators to determine how the 35% will be calculated in year one, and the state will release further guidance this summer.

How will observations be conducted?

Under the state model, all educators will be observed by principals, assistant principals, or other instructional leaders trained in the observation protocol. All observers will use the TAP Rubric, which focuses on four areas: Instruction, Planning, Environment, and Professionalism. The rubrics themselves can be found later in this document.

Why use the TAP Rubric?

The selection of the TAP Rubric came down to two important factors: research and resources. The Department has chosen to use the TAP Rubric as the state model for the 50% observation component based on positive field-test results, research that links the instrument to increases in student achievement, and the capacity of TAP to provide expert trainers for high-quality direct training and certification of all observers statewide. Furthermore, in year one, the Department has committed to providing all schools with the TAP System Training Portal, containing a host of scored lesson videos and linked instructional strategies, which we hope will be a helpful resource for both observers and teachers.

How many observations will be performed each year?

All teachers on professional licenses will be observed four times annually, with two observations occurring in each semester and at least half of all observations unannounced. Apprentice teachers will be observed six times annually, three in each semester and at least half unannounced.

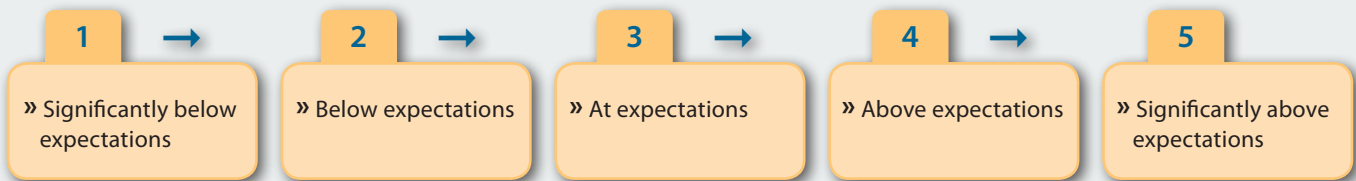
First to the Top Website

www.tn.gov/firsttothetop/programs.html

SCORES AND RATINGS UNDER TEAM

How will overall observation scores be calculated?

The three components (35% growth, 15% student achievement, and 50% observation), will be combined into a single rating on a 5-category scale. Each teacher will receive a final score on this scale:



The state will provide a web-based platform for combining the three component scores into a final rating.

How will my observation scores be used?

The First to the Top Act requires observations to be used as a factor in personnel decisions, including professional development, tenure attainment, and dismissal. The state will provide guidance to districts for using observations in these decisions, including how to best align professional development and other supports to observation results. Ultimately, the primary function of the new observation system is to help improve instruction by developing instructional skills, increasing collaboration and communication, determining needed assistance, and differentiating effective practices.

QUALIFIED OBSERVERS

Principals, assistant principals, and other instructional leaders are eligible to serve as qualified observers. All designated observers must participate in required certification training (4 days) and demonstrate proficiency in the NIET observation process by successfully completing an online, annual certification test to be certified.

This online test consists of two parts:

1. Part One: Lesson Analysis

For this portion of the test, each applicant views a video of a teacher conducting a lesson, which they score using the performance indicators on the rubric. Scores for the “Lesson Analysis” part of the test are calculated by comparing the applicant’s ratings against a benchmark rating for each indicator. The benchmark ratings are derived from the average of three expert raters’ scores. To pass this portion of the test:

- » The applicant’s TOTAL average rating has to fall within one point, plus or minus, of the average TOTAL benchmark rating.
- » The applicant has to be within one point, plus or minus, of the benchmark rating for at least 75 percent of the individual indicators on the rubric (e.g., *Standards and Objectives*, *Teacher Content Knowledge*, etc.).

2. Part Two: Conference Plan

After viewing and scoring the lesson, each applicant will answer a series of questions about the post-conference process. There are eight multiple choice questions and the observer must correctly answer six in order to complete the certification process.

DIRECTIONS

You will need to log in to the training portal with the username and password provided. From the menu of choices listed, please select “Certification.”

STEP 1a. OBSERVE A LESSON

First you will be asked to watch an entire video recorded lesson. Please note that you may pause the video momentarily, but must view the entire video in order to evaluate it.

STEP 1b. EVALUATE THE LESSON

Having completed watching the video, you are now ready to evaluate it. When you click the NEXT button, you will be presented with the Instruction Rubric. Select the best score for each indicator.

When you click NEXT, your scores are compared to the National Raters’ scores and when you receive a passing score, you are prompted to continue to Step 2.



STEP 2. POST-CONFERENCE

In this portion of the Observer Certification, you will be presented a series of questions regarding the post-conference. Upon successful completion of this step, you will be presented an opportunity to print your certificate!

IF YOU DO NOT PASS

If you do not successfully complete either portion of the process, you can retake the test in three days. You are encouraged to take advantage of your online and printed resources to prepare for the next opportunity.

IF YOU HAVE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY

Please review the Job Aide PDF available to download. If your issue continues, click [CONTACT US](#) at the bottom of the screen.

TEAM ANNUAL OBSERVATION CYCLE

PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

Suggested Sequence	Type	Length	Rubric	Pre-Conference	Post-Conference Type
First	Informal (Announced)	15 Min	Planning Rubric—3 indicators (Teacher provides lesson plan)	Yes	Informal
Second	Formal (Announced)	Lesson	Instruction Rubric—all 12 indicators	Yes	Formal
Third	Informal (Unannounced)	15 Min	Environment Rubric—4 indicators	No	Informal
Fourth	Formal (Unannounced)	Lesson	Instruction Rubric—all 12 indicators	No	Formal

APPRENTICE TEACHERS

Suggested Sequence	Type	Length	Rubric	Pre-Conference	Post-Conference Type
First	Informal (Announced)	15 Min	Planning Rubric—3 indicators (Teacher provides lesson plan)	Yes	Informal
Second	Formal (Unannounced)	Lesson	Instruction Rubric—all 12 indicators	No	Formal
Third	Informal (Unannounced)	15 Min	Environment Rubric—4 indicators	No	Informal
Fourth	Formal (Announced)	Lesson	Instruction Rubric—all 12 indicators	Yes	Formal
Fifth	Informal (Announced)	15 Min	Planning Rubric + Environment Rubric—7 indicators	Yes	Informal
Sixth	Formal (Unannounced)	Lesson	Instruction Rubric—all 12 indicators	No	Formal

OBSERVATION PACING GUIDE FOR YOUR SCHOOL

1. Number of professional teachers _____ × 2 formal lesson-length observations =	
2. Number of apprentice teachers _____ × 3 formal lesson-length observations =	
3. Add total from line 1 to total from line 2 to get total number of formal lesson-length observations per year =	
4. Number of observers	
5. Divide line 3 total by line 4 number (full lessons each observer must see) =	
6. Divide line 5 by 30 (number of observation weeks). This is the number of FULL LESSONS each observer will need to see each week to keep on track.	
7. Number of professional teachers _____ × 2 informal 15-minute observations =	
8. Number of apprentice teachers _____ × 3 informal 15-minute observations =	
9. Add total from line 7 to total from line 8 to get total number of informal 15-minute observations per year =	
10. Number of observers	
11. Divide line 9 total by line 10 number (informal observations for each observer) =	
12. Divide line 11 by 30 (number of observation weeks). This is the number of INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS each observer will need to do each week to keep on track.	

OTHER TEAM FAQS

Q: How will observers be trained?

A. All observers will be trained directly by expert trainers in four-day training sessions across the state. At the end of the four days, observers will be required to pass a certification test; additional refresher trainings and support will also be provided throughout the year.

Q. Will all districts use the same observation system?

A. Under state law, all districts must use an observation system that includes the student growth and student achievement components as described previously. However, districts may implement their own observation systems if they are approved by the state board. Currently, Memphis City, Hamilton County and AIMS have all expressed interest in using different observation systems. Districts will communicate with their staff if they use a different observation structure. The overall ratings system will also follow the process described in this document.

Q. How does the new observation intersect with the tenure legislation?

A. Under the new tenure legislation, teachers become eligible for tenure if they have taught for at least five years in the same LEA and have attained a rating in the top two observation categories in each of the previous two years. Teachers who are not rated in the top two observation categories may continue to teach on their current contract status even though they have not become eligible for tenure. A teacher who currently has tenure, or is granted tenure by July 1, 2011, will not lose tenure status under this new legislation.

Q. How will the state ensure that the observation system is implemented fairly?

A. First, only principals, assistant principals, and other instructional leaders who have been trained and who have passed a certification test on the observation rubric may conduct observations. Second, the state will provide guidance to districts this summer to ensure consistent scoring and calculations. Most importantly, the state will analyze the observation implementation and results each year to ensure that we provide the right training and the right guidance to continuously improve the observation system. We will use survey data, focus groups, and the data from the observations themselves to make the system better each year.

Web Resources:

- » Educator observation resources: <http://tn.gov/firsttothetop/programs-committee.html>
- » More First to the Top resources: <http://tn.gov/firsttothetop/index.html>

TEACHING SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND PROFESSIONALISM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The *Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Professionalism Performance Standards* are divided into four domains, as shown in the overview below. Within each domain, performance indicators are listed with bulleted descriptors and a rubric specifying three performance levels for measuring actual teacher performance. Performance definitions are provided at levels 5, 3, and 1, but raters can also score performance at levels 2 or 4 based on their professional judgment. Teachers earn a score of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for each indicator.

INSTRUCTION	ENVIRONMENT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Standards and Objectives Motivating Students Presenting Instructional Content Lesson Structure and Pacing Activities and Materials Questioning Academic Feedback Grouping Students Teacher Content Knowledge Teacher Knowledge of Students Thinking Problem Solving 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expectations Managing Student Behavior Environment Respectful Culture
PLANNING	PROFESSIONALISM
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional Plans Student Work Assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community Involvement School Responsibilities Growing and Developing Professionally Reflecting on Teaching

The *Instruction, Planning, Environment, and Professionalism* rubrics are on the pages following the "Research on the TAP Teaching Standards."

INSTRUCTION

	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATIONS (5)*	AT EXPECTATIONS (3)*	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS (1)*
Standards and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated. Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective. Learning objectives are: (a) consistently connected to what students have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) integrated with other disciplines. Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high. State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson. There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. Sub-objectives are mostly aligned to the lesson's major objective. Learning objectives are connected to what students have previously learned. Expectations for student performance are clear. State standards are displayed. There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. Sub-objectives are inconsistently aligned to the lesson's major objective. Learning objectives are rarely connected to what students have previously learned. Expectations for student performance are vague. State standards are displayed. There is evidence that few students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
Motivating Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher sometimes organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. The teacher sometimes develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. The teacher sometimes reinforces and rewards effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher rarely organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. The teacher rarely develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. The teacher rarely reinforces and rewards effort.
Presenting Instructional Content	<p>Presentation of content always includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson; examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas; modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations; concise communication; logical sequencing and segmenting; all essential information; and no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information. 	<p>Presentation of content most of the time includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson; examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas; modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations; concise communication; logical sequencing and segmenting; all essential information; and no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information. 	<p>Presentation of content rarely includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson; examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas; modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations; concise communication; logical sequencing and segmenting; all essential information; and no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.
Lesson Structure and Pacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson starts promptly. The lesson's structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, end, and time for reflection. Pacing is brisk and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates. Routines for distributing materials are seamless. No instructional time is lost during transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson starts promptly. The lesson's structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, and end. Pacing is appropriate and sometimes provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates. Routines for distributing materials are efficient. Little instructional time is lost during transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson does not start promptly. The lesson has a structure, but may be missing closure or introductory elements. Pacing is appropriate for less than half of the students and rarely provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates. Routines for distributing materials are inefficient. Considerable time is lost during transitions.

* Performance definitions are provided at levels 5, 3, and 1. Raters can score performance at levels 2 or 4 based on their professional judgment.

INSTRUCTION *Continued*

	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATIONS (5)	AT EXPECTATIONS (3)	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS (1)
Activities and Materials	<p>Activities and materials include all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the lesson objectives; • are challenging; • sustain students' attention; • elicit a variety of thinking; • provide time for reflection; • are relevant to students' lives; • provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction; • induce student curiosity and suspense; • provide students with choices; • incorporate multimedia and technology; and • incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.). <p>• In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring.</p>	<p>Activities and materials include most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the lesson objectives; • are challenging; • sustain students' attention; • elicit a variety of thinking; • provide time for reflection; • are relevant to students' lives; • provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction; • induce student curiosity and suspense; • provide students with choices; • incorporate multimedia and technology; and • incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.). 	<p>Activities and materials include few of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the lesson objectives; • are challenging; • sustain students' attention; • elicit a variety of thinking; • provide time for reflection; • are relevant to students' lives; • provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction; • induce student curiosity and suspense; • provide students with choices; • incorporate multimedia and technology; and • incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, etc.).
Questioning	<p>Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing a balanced mix of question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ knowledge and comprehension; ◦ application and analysis; and ◦ creation and evaluation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent. • A high frequency of questions is asked. • Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions regularly require active responses (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided. • The teacher calls on volunteers and nonvolunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex. • Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning. 	<p>Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing for some, but not all, question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ knowledge and comprehension; ◦ application and analysis; and ◦ creation and evaluation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are usually purposeful and coherent. • A moderate frequency of questions is asked. • Questions are sometimes sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions sometimes require active responses (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time is sometimes provided. • The teacher calls on volunteers and nonvolunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex. 	<p>Teacher questions are inconsistent in quality and include few question types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ knowledge and comprehension; ◦ application and analysis; and ◦ creation and evaluation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are random and lack coherence. • A low frequency of questions is asked. • Questions are rarely sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Questions rarely require active responses (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • Wait time is inconsistently provided. • The teacher mostly calls on volunteers and high-ability students.

INSTRUCTION *Continued*

	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATIONS (5)	AT EXPECTATIONS (3)	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS (1)
Academic Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality. Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review. The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress, and provide individual feedback. Feedback from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction. Teacher engages students in giving specific and high-quality feedback to one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral and written feedback is mostly academically focused, frequent, and mostly high quality. Feedback is sometimes given during guided practice and homework review. The teacher circulates during instructional activities to support engagement and monitor student work. Feedback from students is sometimes used to monitor and adjust instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality and timeliness of feedback is inconsistent. Feedback is rarely given during guided practice and homework review. The teacher circulates during instructional activities, but monitors mostly behavior. Feedback from students is rarely used to monitor or adjust instruction.
Grouping Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency. All students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. All students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to best accomplish the goals of the lesson. Instructional groups facilitate opportunities for students to set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) adequately enhance student understanding and learning efficiency. Most students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. Most students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to, most of the time, accomplish the goals of the lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) inhibit student understanding and learning efficiency. Few students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations. Few students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work. Instructional group composition remains unchanged, irrespective of the learning and instructional goals of a lesson.
Teacher Content Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches. Teacher regularly implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. Teacher regularly highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas. Limited content is taught in sufficient depth to allow for the development of understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches. Teacher sometimes implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. Teacher sometimes highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher displays under-developed content knowledge in several subject areas. Teacher rarely implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. Teacher does not understand key concepts and ideas in the discipline and therefore presents content in an unconnected way.
Teacher Knowledge of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning difficulties. Teacher practices regularly incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. Teacher regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher practices display understanding of some students' anticipated learning difficulties. Teacher practices sometimes incorporate student interests and cultural heritage. Teacher sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher practices demonstrate minimal knowledge of students' anticipated learning difficulties. Teacher practices rarely incorporate student interests or cultural heritage. Teacher practices demonstrate little differentiation of instructional methods or content.

INSTRUCTION *Continued*

	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATIONS (5)	AT EXPECTATIONS (3)	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS (1)
Thinking	<p>The teacher thoroughly teaches two or more types of thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information; • practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios; • creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and • research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. <p>The teacher provides opportunities where students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; • analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints; and • monitor their thinking to ensure that they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using and why. 	<p>The teacher thoroughly teaches one type of thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information; • practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios; • creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and • research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. <p>The teacher provides opportunities where students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; and • analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints. 	<p>The teacher implements no learning experiences that thoroughly teach any type of thinking.</p> <p>The teacher provides no opportunities where students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; or • analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.
Problem Solving	<p>The teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce three or more of the following problem-solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing 	<p>The teacher implements activities that teach two of the following problem-solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solution • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing 	<p>The teacher implements no activities that teach the following problem-solving types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstraction • Categorization • Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solution • Predicting Outcomes • Observing and Experimenting • Improving Solutions • Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information • Generating Ideas • Creating and Designing

PLANNING

	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATIONS (5)	AT EXPECTATIONS (3)	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS (1)
Instructional Plans	<p>Instructional plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards; activities, materials, and assessments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are aligned to state standards. are sequenced from basic to complex. build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines. provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure; evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners; and evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs. 	<p>Instructional plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> goals aligned to state content standards; activities, materials, and assessments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are aligned to state standards. are sequenced from basic to complex. build on prior student knowledge. provide appropriate time for student work, and lesson and unit closure; evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of most learners; and evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs. 	<p>Instructional plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> few goals aligned to state content standards; activities, materials, and assessments that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are rarely aligned to state standards. are rarely logically sequenced. are rarely build on prior student knowledge inconsistently provide time for student work, and lesson and unit closure; little evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, or interests of the learners; and little evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.
Student Work	<p>Assignments require students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it; draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing; and connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives, both inside and outside of school. 	<p>Assignments require students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpret information rather than reproduce it; draw conclusions and support them through writing; and connect what they are learning to prior learning and some life experiences. 	<p>Assignments require students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly reproduce information; rarely draw conclusions and support them through writing; and rarely connect what they are learning to prior learning or life experiences.
Assessment	<p>Assessment Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are aligned with state content standards; have clear measurement criteria; measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice test); require extended written tasks; are portfolio-based with clear illustrations of student progress toward state content standards; and include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction. 	<p>Assessment Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are aligned with state content standards; have measurement criteria; measure student performance in more than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice test); require written tasks; and include performance checks throughout the school year. 	<p>Assessment Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are rarely aligned with state content standards; have ambiguous measurement criteria; measure student performance in less than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice test); and include performance checks, although the purpose of these checks is not clear.

ENVIRONMENT

	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE EXPECTATIONS (5)	AT EXPECTATIONS (3)	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW EXPECTATIONS (1)
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student. Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success. Students take initiative and follow through with their own work. Teacher optimizes instructional time, teaches more material, and demands better performance from every student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student. Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. Teacher creates learning opportunities where most students can experience success. Students complete their work according to teacher expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher expectations are not sufficiently high for every student. Teacher creates an environment where mistakes and failure are not viewed as learning experiences. Students demonstrate little or no pride in the quality of their work.
Managing Student Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are consistently well-behaved and on task. Teacher and students establish clear rules for learning and behavior. The teacher uses several techniques, such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences, to maintain appropriate student behavior. The teacher overlooks inconsequential behavior. The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class. The teacher attends to disruptions quickly and firmly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are mostly well-behaved and on task, some minor learning disruptions may occur. Teacher establishes rules for learning and behavior. The teacher uses some techniques, such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences, to maintain appropriate student behavior. The teacher overlooks some inconsequential behavior, but other times addresses it, stopping the lesson. The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions, yet sometimes he or she addresses the entire class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are not well-behaved and are often off task. Teacher establishes few rules for learning and behavior. The teacher uses few techniques to maintain appropriate student behavior. The teacher cannot distinguish between inconsequential behavior and inappropriate behavior. Disruptions frequently interrupt instruction.
Environment	<p>The classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> welcomes all members and guests. is organized and understandable to all students. supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible. displays student work that frequently changes. is arranged to promote individual and group learning. 	<p>The classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> welcomes most members and guests. is organized and understandable to most students. supplies, equipment, and resources are accessible. displays student work. is arranged to promote individual and group learning. 	<p>The classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is somewhat cold and uninviting. is not well-organized and understandable to students. supplies, equipment, and resources are difficult to access. does not display student work. is not arranged to promote group learning.
Respectful Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect for one another. Students exhibit caring and respect for one another. Teacher seeks out and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students. Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher-student interactions are generally friendly, but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students' cultures. Students exhibit respect for the teacher and are generally polite to each other. Teacher is sometimes receptive to the interests and opinions of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher-student interactions are sometimes authoritarian, negative, or inappropriate. Students exhibit disrespect for the teacher. Student interaction is characterized by conflict, sarcasm, or put-downs. Teacher is not receptive to interests and opinions of students.

PROFESSIONALISM

Performance Standard		Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Growing and Developing Professionally	1. The educator is prompt, prepared, and participates in professional development opportunities.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	2. The educator appropriately attempts to implement new strategies.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	3. The educator develops and works on a personal learning plan based on analyses of school improvement plans and goals, self-assessment, and feedback from observations.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
Reflecting on Teaching	4. The educator makes thoughtful and accurate assessments of his/her effectiveness as evidenced by the self-reflection after each observation.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	5. The educator takes action to improve his/her performance.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	6. The educator utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional or support decisions.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
Community Involvement	7. The educator actively supports school activities and events.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
School Responsibilities	8. The educator adheres to school and district policies for personnel.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	9. The educator works with peers in contributing to a safe and orderly learning environment.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	10. The educator contributes to the school community by assisting/mentoring others, including collaborative planning, coaching, or mentoring other educators, or supervising clinical experiences for aspiring teachers.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely

EXPLANATION OF THE TAP TEACHING STANDARDS

This section will review the important elements of the first three domains of the *Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Professionalism Performance Standards*. The following pages provide an explanation of all the indicators for *Instruction, Planning, and Environment*. Each indicator's descriptors will be explained with examples of how these descriptors might be implemented in a classroom. Additionally, this section provides suggested coaching questions for observers to utilize when conferencing with teachers, as well as suggested applications for professional development learning.

INSTRUCTION

This section includes resources and information on the 12 indicators under *Instruction*:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Standards and Objectives | 7. Academic Feedback |
| 2. Motivating Students | 8. Grouping Students |
| 3. Presenting Instructional Content | 9. Teacher Content Knowledge |
| 4. Lesson Structure and Pacing | 10. Teacher Knowledge of Students |
| 5. Activities and Materials | 11. Thinking |
| 6. Questioning | 12. Problem Solving |

Standards and Objectives

Planning effective lessons aligned to the standards is dependent upon the teacher's ability to create and communicate *clearly defined learning outcomes* or objectives appropriate for the students. In many ways this indicator is the foundation for all other indicators because if the teacher is not clear about what he or she wants students to know and be able to do as a result of the lesson, the balance of the lesson cannot be properly developed or implemented. Both the students and the teacher should understand what is to be accomplished during each lesson.

Exemplary Descriptors for Standards and Objectives

1. All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated.
2. Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective.

3. Learning objectives are:
 - » Consistently connected to what students have previously learned;
 - » Know from life experiences; and
 - » Integrated with other disciplines.
4. Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high.
5. State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson.
6. There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.

Descriptor 1: All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated.

The first descriptor under *Standards and Objectives* deals with the ability to “explicitly communicate” the objective or learning outcome, whether it is a state standard or sub-objective of a standard. Before a learning objective can be clearly communicated, it must be clearly written. There are three components of a clearly written objective:

1. Observable verbs/actions
2. Clear description of learning outcome
3. Measurable standards

Bloom’s Taxonomy can assist in writing objectives. Observable verbs are arranged in order of complexity in thinking. However, “explicitly communicated objectives” go beyond merely stating a clearly written objective or standard. Communicated implies that the teacher can be certain that the students know and understand the learning objective. This requires the teacher to continually make references to the objective/standard throughout the lesson and to make connections for what the teacher and students are doing as it relates to the lesson’s objective. This also provides purpose for what takes place during a lesson. The teacher and students may also refer to the stated objective/standard again at the end of the lesson for a reflection on how the students met the learning objective.

Descriptor 2: Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson’s major objective.

Once the objective is clearly defined, the next step is to develop the necessary sub-objectives. The selection of appropriate sub-objectives depends on the needs of the students, the complexity of the objective, and the content. There are three basic reasons for including sub-objectives:

1. To review **prior learning**
2. To teach a **new sub-skill**
3. To teach a **process** that supports the main objective

EXAMPLE 1:

Teacher: “Today we will be creating a graph that illustrates how classmates responded to a questionnaire about sports using the pie, bar, or line format. I have put together a rubric to assist you in completing this assignment.”

When looking at the objective above, several sub-objectives could be identified. In reality, the needs of the students would determine what sub-objectives to include. For this example, there are a few sub-objectives that would probably be included in this lesson so that all students could be successful:

- To understand how to apply the pie, bar, and line graph (prior learning)
- To be able to calculate results of surveys into percentages (prior learning)
- To be able to apply the rubric to the project (process)

EXAMPLE 2:

Teacher: “Today we are going to write a paragraph about a character in the story we just read. First you will complete this graphic organizer. It will provide guidance in describing your character effectively. Next you can write the paragraph. Use this paragraph checklist when you do your final edit.”

This objective is very complex. It requires the student’s ability to do many things other than the main objective of writing a paragraph. To what degree the sub-objectives must be taught may vary. As one might expect, there are times when what appeared to be a sub-objective becomes the lesson’s objective based on the students’ needs. Here are a few of the identifiable sub-objectives for this objective:

- To apply a paragraph format (prior learning)
- To be able to apply the pre-writing graphic organizer (sub-skill)
- To be able to identify characteristics of characters from a text (sub-skill)
- To be able to access each item on the checklist (process)

Descriptor 3: Learning objectives are:

- » **Consistently connected to what students have previously learned;**
- » **Know from life experiences; and**
- » **Integrated with other disciplines.**

This descriptor is about making connections in learning. It is important for teachers to connect new learning to prior learning so students are able to see learning as a continuum and to make real-life connections about how this learning impacts their lives. This connection can be done in a variety of ways. This descriptor is closely related to the descriptors under *Motivating Students* and *Teacher Knowledge of Students*, which refer to relevancy of students’ lives and the incorporation of their interests and cultural heritage.

EXAMPLE 3:

A teacher may model his/her thought process as he/she makes a connection to a specific topic and then lead students to do this through questioning. It may also be accomplished through group projects based on real-life scenarios. For example, students learning measurement may calculate the amount of carpet or paint needed to redecorate their room. Students learning about the Great Depression may research how policies from Roosevelt’s New Deal continue to affect them today.

It is also important for teachers to lead students to make connections for how what they learn in one content area connects to another content area. For example, when measuring or creating graphs in science, a teacher may make connections to math with an emphasis on math vocabulary students are learning. In literature classes, connections may be made between what is being read and a historical time period students may be studying in social studies. It is important to make such connections significant and meaningful to students.

Descriptor 4: Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high.

This descriptor deals with creating learning objectives and expectations that are demanding and of high quality for all students. Whether the teacher has succeeded in doing so can only be determined by the students' response to the lesson. It is important to look at assessment and other diagnostic methods for determining what to teach. For an objective to be demanding and high for all students, a teacher may need to develop different activities and/or assessments for different levels of students within the class. It is important that all students are challenged by the learning objective.

This descriptor refers to not only clear expectations for what students are to do to support their learning, but also clear expectations for procedures and student behavior during the lesson. For expectations to be clear, students should be provided a model for what they are to do. This may include the use of visuals, teacher or student modeling, anchor papers, and rubrics to demonstrate how student work will be assessed, written steps the students are to follow when completing the assignment, etc. If students are working in groups, expectations for each group member, as well as the expectation for the group as a whole, should be clearly explained. Students need to clearly understand how they will be held accountable for individual work and group work. Procedures for obtaining materials for the group work, the expected noise level, where students may work, etc. should all be clearly explained. This descriptor connects to the *Presenting Instructional Content* descriptor, "modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his/her performance expectations," and the *Grouping Students* descriptor, "all students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations."

Descriptor 5: State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson.

This descriptor deals with the importance of providing a visual display of the state standard or learning objective that can be referenced by the teacher and students throughout the lesson.

Posting the Standard or Objective

Posting the state standards in the classroom provides a visual purpose for why students are learning what they are learning. However, it is not beneficial to post a standard that all students cannot see, is not referenced, or is not understood. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to reference the standard in language that students understand throughout the lesson to provide direction and focus. Many state standards are also the language of the state test. Therefore, it is important to post the standard as an opportunity to teach students vocabulary they will need to know to be successful. In some cases, teachers use pictures or symbols to expand meaning for them. This is especially true for lower-grade students, visual learners, and students not familiar with the English language. To derive full meaning from posting the standards, the following suggestions are made:

- » Post the standards in **large enough print so that all students can read** them from their seats. By doing this, the teacher can reference them any time and know that the students are able to see and read them. Posting standards that only can be read by the teacher does not provide a learning tool for the students.
- » Post the standards **using some visual formatting** such as webbing, mapping, or any other meaningful graphic organizer. This supports students in making connections among the standards and other content areas. For example, a teacher may create a web for standards connected to what the students will be learning about World War II. The center of the web would reference World War II. The spokes or lines extending from the center would reference the sub-standards or objectives that will be part of the unit, such as significant individuals they will be studying, important battles, etc.

- » Post anchor papers or **examples of exemplary student work** along with scoring rubrics to demonstrate how students will be assessed for meeting the standard(s). These exemplary pieces may be from former students or teacher-created examples.
- » Post standards for a specific unit together in the classroom. By doing this, the teacher and/or students can follow the progression of sub-objectives for a particular unit and date the standards as they are learned. This method of posting standards can provide students with a clear direction for a new unit of study.
- » Provide students copies of standards to keep in their notebooks so they can record when each are taught and mastered.

Referencing the Standards

State standards are usually broad in scope. Before mastery of the standard can be accomplished, it is often necessary that students master many subordinate sub-objectives first. A metaphor provides an understanding of how the standards relate to teaching on a daily basis. For example, a state standard can be compared to the main idea of a story, while the daily lessons represent the supporting details. Therefore, by referencing the state standards, the student has an opportunity to relate the lesson to the “big picture” and to prior learning.

Involving the Students

There are many ways in which students can be involved with the referencing process for the standards. The following suggestions have been effective in classrooms:

- » A student is assigned the job of recording standards. After the lesson objective is identified, the student records a date on the section of the standard that is being addressed in the lesson. This method provides additional purpose for displaying the standard in a manner that the teacher and students can continually reference.
- » Students may have the standards at their desks where they individually record the date beside the standard(s) represented in the lesson for the day and reflect on how they met the standard at the conclusion of the lesson.
- » Students record at the top of the assigned paper which standard(s) is being addressed during the lesson.
- » Students may also engage in a think/pair/share activity where students reflect on and verbalize the meaning of the standard and how they met it during the lesson. This activity also connects to the *Activities and Materials* descriptors, “provide time for reflection” and “provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction.” By allowing students to pair/share, a teacher implements the descriptor under *Grouping Students*, “the instructional grouping of students also becomes varied.”
- » Some teachers record the standard(s) being addressed on each student assignment. This helps when recording scores in the grade book as well. The more a teacher can document when and how the standards have been taught, the more precisely a teacher can provide evidence for students’ mastery of a standard. Parents, board members, principals, and other constituents are becoming increasingly insistent that there be evidence that the standards have been effectively taught and mastered.
- » Many schools are posting student work and identifying the standards that are represented in the displays throughout the school. By displaying student work related to the state standards, parents and other visitors understand and appreciate what students are expected to learn. Showing work in this way also develops a better understanding of how a complex set of state standards progresses.

Descriptor 6: There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.

This descriptor is the most important one of all. No matter what teachers do or do not do, if students do not learn the information, then it is a waste of time and effort. Teachers must focus on what students have learned as opposed to what they have taught. Effective teachers plan formative assessments (verbal and/or written) that enable them to check for student mastery of the material taught and make modifications to their future lesson plans to meet the needs still evident in the student work.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

- How do you decide on the standards/objectives you will teach?
- How do you identify the sub-objectives for a lesson?
- How do you decide on the method you will use to communicate the standards/objectives to students?
- How do you utilize a visual of the standards/objectives during a lesson?
- How do you communicate your expectations to the students?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- *Descriptor 1 of Standards and Objectives:* When modeling a strategy in a professional development meeting, the leader of professional development can use the opportunity to model effective standards and objectives to teachers as if they were students. During the model, the leader would connect how the strategy addresses state standards and present an objective as he/she would in a classroom. This would increase the sense of purpose of the professional development meeting learning, and when developing the strategy teachers would be more likely to also emulate this best practice when they transfer the strategy into their classrooms.
- *Descriptors 1, 2, and 5 of Standards and Objectives:* When a leader communicates the expected outcome for the professional development meeting, he/she is modeling the first descriptor from this indicator. To deepen teachers' understanding and sense of purpose, a leader may ask teachers how their understanding of the outcome supports their new learning. This type of question can assist teachers in making connections for how student learning is supported by their understanding of standards/objectives that are clearly communicated. Many leaders post the school goal and professional development goals in the meeting room as a visual to use in modeling the importance of displaying standards in a classroom. By displaying these and referencing them each meeting, the leader models how teachers need to make connections for the objective of a lesson to the standard to which it is aligned.
- *Descriptors 2 and 3 of Standards and Objectives:* When a leader reviews what the teachers have been working on in professional development, he/she models how to connect current learning objectives to previous learning.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING continued

- **Descriptor 6 of *Standards and Objectives*:** A leader must have evidence that teachers have demonstrated mastery of the new learning for there to be an immediate application of the learning into the classroom. By providing sufficient development time and clear expectations for what teachers are to develop, a leader models how this evidence can be obtained from teachers. During development time, a leader should be circulating among the teachers and questioning them to gather evidence that teachers have met mastery. By identifying for teachers what he/she is doing, a leader is able to model these descriptors for the teachers and lead them in making connections for methods they can use in obtaining this evidence from their students.

Motivating Students

This indicator focuses on a teacher's ability to organize and present the content in a manner that motivates students to learn. For a teacher to be able to develop these types of learning experiences, a teacher must have in-depth knowledge of the students he/she teaches. Therefore, this indicator connects strongly to *Teacher Knowledge of Students*.

Exemplary Descriptors for Motivating Students

1. The teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students.
2. The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued.
3. The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort.

For content to be personally meaningful to students there must be a clearly communicated purpose for student learning. Students need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is important for them to master and how their mastery of this will impact their own lives. Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity, and exploration provide opportunities for students to generate questions and conduct their own research or explore to locate the answers. When students have opportunities to generate their own questions about a given topic, their motivation to learn is usually increased as the learning becomes more student-directed than teacher-directed.

EXAMPLE 1:

A teacher presents a lesson on immigration during the 1860s. She brings in current newspaper articles on immigrants and refugees moving to the United States. Students also interview individuals who have immigrated to the United States. These activities make the content studied relevant to the students' lives and personally meaningful. Students also have the opportunity to develop their own questions to ask during the interviews, which provide experiences that value inquiry. This example also provides a real-world application of immigration.

EXAMPLE 2:

A teacher presents a lesson on measurement. Students design a new school cafeteria applying the measurement skills taught. An architect speaks to the students and explains how measurement is used in his profession.

Teachers may reinforce and reward effort in a variety of ways. Students may be rewarded through verbal praise or recognition. A teacher may also use several student examples of work as a model for other students to follow. When a teacher effectively uses *Academic Feedback*, he/she is also reinforcing and rewarding effort by acknowledging students' responses with an explanation for why the response may be accurate or inaccurate. This type of feedback supports an environment in which students feel safe to take risks and respond to questions. In this way it is rewarding and reinforcing their efforts.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON MOTIVATING STUDENTS

- How do you organize the content of a lesson so that it is meaningful and relevant to the students?
- How do you develop learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to ask questions and explore?
- How do you reinforce and reward the efforts of all students?
- Why is it important for students to have opportunities to develop their own questions and search for the answers?
- How does student motivation impact student achievement?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When modeling new learning in professional development meetings, a leader of professional development should include how he/she made the strategy meaningful and relevant to students while vetting the strategy.
- Leaders need to reinforce and reward the efforts of teachers as they participate in the new learning and develop the new learning for implementation in their classrooms. By doing this, they are modeling for teachers the types of comments they should be using in their own classrooms.
- By bringing in their own student work, analyzing it, and identifying continued student needs, teachers are able to see the connection between professional development learning and their own students. Additionally, when a leader can use data from vetting of a strategy to show that the strategy being learned in professional development will directly address the needs of the teachers' students, and student work is integrated into the development of the new learning, it serves to further motivate teachers to participate.

Presenting Instructional Content

This indicator deals with the method in which content is taught within a lesson. The use of visuals and a teacher's ability to clearly communicate performance expectations in a concise and logically sequenced manner are addressed by this indicator's descriptors. The use of visuals with examples, illustrations, analogies, and/or labels are important tools to use when introducing new concepts and can lead students to mastery of specific skills in a more efficient manner. However, it may be that all of these are not included in one lesson. It is important that they are used effectively and appropriately for the content and students taught.

Exemplary Descriptors for Presenting Instructional Content

Presentation of content always includes:

1. Visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson;
2. Examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas;
3. Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations;
4. Concise communication;
5. Logical sequencing and segmenting;
6. All essential information; and
7. No irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.

Descriptor 1: Visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson

The first item under this indicator refers to the effective use of visual materials to assist the learner in making connections with prior learning and in clarifying newly acquired concepts. Visuals that preview the lesson also provide students with a direction for where they are headed and what they will be doing. They support students in identifying and understanding the progression of the lesson. Based on these indicators, there are two main applications for graphic organizers or visuals:

1. Visuals that assist in the learning process
2. Visuals that organize information for the learner

It is important to note that internal summaries (mini reviews within a lesson of what has been taught) may be provided visually or orally by the teacher and students. When a teacher continually reviews sub-objectives in order to connect to the next sub-objective, students are led to ultimately move towards mastery of the lesson objective. Internal summaries provide students opportunities to have concepts restated and to reflect within a lesson on what they are learning as opposed to waiting for a review of all concepts at the end of the lesson. Teachers can lead students in providing these summaries through his/her questions and group discussions.

Descriptor 2: Examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas

Words, mental pictures, and other clarifying techniques simplify and organize new information for the learner.

Application of the methods listed in this descriptor enhances learning in the following ways:

1. **Examples:** When presenting a new concept, carefully selected examples help students to understand information. For example, during a lesson about metaphors, the teacher provided visual examples of metaphors from her own writing. She also modeled her thinking process as she created the metaphors. This type of example not only provided opportunities for students to view metaphors, but also to gain an understanding for how they were created within the teacher's writing.
2. **Illustrations:** Providing an illustration of what is being studied helps all learners, especially visual learners. For example, before dissecting a frog, students studied an illustration depicting the internal organs. The illustration also demonstrated how to cut into the frog. Teachers may also use paintings or photographs to provide illustrations of new concepts or historical time periods.
3. **Analogies:** There are times when analogies clarify information for learners. For example, to clarify the distances related to the solar system, a teacher introduced nine common spheres of similar proportions as the planets. She then took students out on the playground and had students arrange them at appropriate distances from the sun, making clear connections for how what they were doing related to distances within the solar system. In this example, students actually participated in the analogy. Another example of an analogy is the comparison of appropriate graphic organizers to the choosing of appropriate tools to hammer in nails or tighten screws. The teacher explained to students that graphic organizers are "tools" to support their organization of material and different organizers support different tasks.
4. **Labels:** Labels help clarify information. For example, students were having a difficult time writing complete sentences so the teacher decided to have students label the parts of their sentences. Pictures with labels may also be used to introduce vocabulary, important people, or new concepts. This type of labeling would be strong since it combines the use of illustrations and labels. During a study of the solar system, the teacher modeled for the students how to label planets. During a study of the circulatory system, a teacher modeled how to label the parts of the heart and identify the function for each part.

Descriptor 3: Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations

The ability to model the use of new information and the teacher's expectations for student performance is one of the most important descriptors for this indicator. An effective teacher must be able to model desired outcomes.

In order to model effectively, the teacher must be able to do the following:

- » Know exactly what the expected outcome is
- » Identify the critical elements of the desired outcome
- » Create clearly defined steps so learners can achieve the desired outcome
- » Provide examples for how the completed project/assignment should look

EXAMPLE: KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE EXPECTED OUTCOME IS

A teacher explained to the students that the learning objective was for them to be able to identify physical characteristics of two characters from a novel and compare and contrast them. She told the students they would be expected to create an illustration of two characters from a novel the class was reading and then complete a Venn Diagram to compare their characteristics. She chose two different characters to model her expectations and the thought process she went through in deciding how to draw the characters. She explained various ways the students could approach the project and provided clear criteria through the use of a rubric for how the finished project would be evaluated. She led the students to apply the rubric to her work as an additional way to ensure they understood her expectations for their work. She then modeled how she took the characteristics of the two drawings and used a Venn Diagram to organize the similarities and differences in the drawings. Students were able to clearly understand the expected outcome for the lesson and the expectations for their work.

EXAMPLE: IDENTIFY THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE DESIRED OUTCOME

As the teacher modeled her work of the steps in the example above, she identified the elements or requirements for the student work. Using the rubric for the assignments, she identified each required element of the illustration and Venn Diagram on her examples. This provided students a clear understanding of what needed to be included in each assignment and how the elements would be evaluated.

EXAMPLE: CREATE CLEARLY DEFINED STEPS SO LEARNERS CAN ACHIEVE THE DESIRED OUTCOME

When modeling the expectations for the assignment in the example above, the teacher clearly explained the order in which the students would need to complete the steps required for the assignment. First, they would need to select two important characters with criteria for how to select them. Then students would need to identify specific characteristics of these characters that would be incorporated into their illustrations. The explanation would continue through each step. To support visual learners, the teacher may display a written list of the steps on the board or chart paper.

Descriptors 4-7: Concise communication; logical sequencing and segmenting; all essential information; and no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information

These descriptors relate to a teacher's knowledge of the content he/she is teaching and his/her ability to clearly explain the content to students in a logical manner. For this to occur, a teacher must first clearly define the learning objective for the lesson and then maintain the focus of the lesson on this objective, which may require teachers to redirect students' comments. The sequencing of the lesson relates to the sub-objectives that are taught within

a lesson. Sub-objectives should be taught or reviewed in an appropriate sequence for the grade level and ability of the students. The segmenting of the lesson relates to the pacing of the lesson. An effective teacher will provide sufficient time for the introduction of the lesson, the instruction within the lesson, the student activities, and closure. Although these may be embedded within each other during a given lesson, the segmenting of the lesson allows sufficient time for each to take place so that students can have opportunities to master the learning objective. Therefore, these descriptors are closely connected to the descriptor, “teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches,” under *Teacher Content Knowledge*, and the descriptor, “pacing is appropriate, and sometimes provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates,” under *Lesson Structure and Pacing*.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON PRESENTING INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

- How do you decide on the types of visuals you will use during a lesson?
- Why is it important for the teacher to model his/her expectations for students?
- How do you plan for effective modeling during a lesson?
- How do students clearly know your expectations for their assignments and for what they are to learn?
- When planning a lesson, how do you decide on the sequencing of the instruction within the lesson?
- When planning a lesson, how do you decide on the manner in which the different elements of the lesson will be segmented?
- How do you maintain focus in a lesson on the learning objective?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When leaders of professional development provide a visual for what teachers will be doing during the meeting, they are modeling the use of visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson and preview the organization of the lesson. By making reference to the visual, a leader models for teachers how these visuals can be utilized.
- When leaders model the new learning for teachers with a clear explanation of the strategy, or chunk of the strategy, along with the critical attributes, they are modeling the third descriptor. A leader needs to ask him/herself how will teachers know exactly what they need to do in the classroom to ensure their teaching of the strategy results in increased student achievement. For this to occur, teachers need a model. In this same way, students must have a model of a teacher’s explanations. Therefore, a leader needs to clearly model for the teachers how they should model in their own classrooms. This may include specific visuals that need to be used, examples of analogies to support student understanding, and appropriate sequencing of the instruction. Through effective modeling of these elements, a leader provides clarity for how teachers need to present the strategy (content) in their classrooms so the result is increased student achievement.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING continued

- Descriptors 4 through 7 play a role in the how a strategy is “chunked” to ensure that the new learning for teachers is manageable and able to be mastered by the end of the professional development meeting. Of course, the ultimate driver of professional development learning is student data, but leaders also need to take into consideration the amount of new learning teachers can learn, develop, and implement proficiently before the next meeting.

Lesson Structure and Pacing

This indicator blends time and form as it applies to instruction. It addresses the effective segmenting of the lesson so that sufficient time is allocated to all parts of the lesson to best support student learning. Therefore, this indicator connects closely to the descriptor, “logical sequencing and segmenting,” under *Presenting Instructional Content*.

Exemplary Descriptors for Lesson Structure and Pacing

1. The lesson starts promptly.
2. The lesson’s structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, end, and time for reflection.
3. Pacing is brisk and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates.
4. Routines for distributing materials are seamless.
5. No instructional time is lost during transitions.

Descriptors Focused on Time/Pacing

The rubric indicator focuses on the following issues associated with instructional time:

1. Prompt start
2. Different learning rates
3. Seamless routines
4. Smooth transition

Starting promptly, building smooth transitions, and developing seamless routines can be done with practice and careful planning. The greatest challenge presented in this indicator is the ability to provide enough time so that all students of varying rates of learning can complete each learning task. Therefore, it is important that a teacher has knowledge of the various learning needs of his/her students.

When reviewing evidence from a lesson for these descriptors, the third descriptor, “pacing is brisk,” refers to the efficient use of instructional time during the lesson, not the speed of the lesson. Was appropriate time devoted to each element of the lesson? Did the lesson continue to flow or was there time wasted in which students were not focused or engaged in the learning? If the pacing is brisk, all students remain focused and engaged in learning throughout the lesson. Students do not experience “down time” while waiting on other students to complete assignments or on instruction that they have already mastered. Therefore, this descriptor connects to a teacher’s use of student feedback to monitor and adjust instruction under *Academic Feedback* to ensure that the pacing of the lesson is brisk and meets the needs of all students.

EXAMPLE:

A teacher begins a lesson on the causes of the Revolutionary War with an explanation of the learning objective and a preview of the lesson (clear beginning). He then provides direct instruction by modeling how to complete a graphic organizer on the causes and effects of the war. Students are led to finish the organizer on their own as they read the text or other source of information. Students who are below grade level in reading continue to receive direct instruction from the teacher and assistance in completing the graphic organizer. Students who are on grade level or above complete the assignment independently and are provided additional activities to enhance their understanding of the causes (pacing provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates). Before students are dismissed, the teacher brings the class together again and reviews the objective and has students identify the causes and effects they included on their graphic organizers (closure). Students complete an exit ticket before leaving class in which they reflect on which cause of the war they believe had the greatest impact (time for reflection).

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON LESSON STRUCTURE AND PACING

- How do you decide on the manner in which you will segment the different parts of a lesson?
- How do you plan for effective closure within a lesson?
- How do you plan for the pacing of a lesson that provides opportunities for students who progress at different rates?
- How do you ensure that instructional time is used efficiently throughout a lesson so that all students remain actively engaged in learning?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When leaders of professional development model new learning, they need to include how they began the lesson and how they provided closure to the lesson. The manner in which these were done should be clearly labeled for teachers.
- In addition to including a clear beginning and closure in the modeling, leaders should include a clear beginning and closure to the professional development meeting, which can be done by reviewing the school and professional development goals to set the purpose for the new learning and by providing a review of the new learning at the end of the meeting. When leaders do this, they need to make the connection for teachers that they are modeling how a lesson should begin and end.
- Leaders also model lesson structure and pacing by appropriately pacing for the different parts of a professional development meeting.

Activities and Materials

This indicator addresses the variety and appropriateness of activities and materials that a teacher chooses to implement during a lesson. By using a variety of materials and activities, teachers are able to address various learning styles and intelligences. Therefore, the criteria used by teachers in choosing materials and activities should be those that clearly support the lesson objectives and that are related to the needs of the students, making this indicator closely related to *Teacher Knowledge of Students*. In order to plan appropriate activities and materials, a teacher must have knowledge of the needs and interests of the students.

Exemplary Descriptors for Activities and Materials

Activities and materials include all of the following:

1. Support the lesson objectives;
2. Are challenging;
3. Sustain students' attention;
4. Elicit a variety of thinking;
5. Provide time for reflection;
6. Are relevant to students' lives;
7. Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction;
8. Induce student curiosity and suspense;
9. Provide students with choices;
10. Incorporate multimedia and technology; and
11. Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts.
12. In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring.

The descriptors for *Activities and Materials* can be classified into three main categories:

1. Content-Related Descriptors

1. Support the lesson objectives
2. Are challenging
3. Elicit a variety of thinking
4. Provide time for reflection
5. Are relevant to students' lives

2. Student-Centered Descriptors

1. Sustain students' attention
2. Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction
3. Induce student curiosity and suspense
4. Provide students with choices

3. Materials Descriptors

1. Incorporate multimedia and technology
2. Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts
3. In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, etc.

When applying this indicator to a lesson, it is critical that evidence for the first descriptor exists. Therefore, this descriptor connects directly to the descriptors under *Standards and Objectives*. A teacher may incorporate a variety of activities and materials within a lesson, but if their use is not purposeful in supporting students in meeting the learning objective, then the purpose for their use may not be clear or appropriate.

In developing activities and materials that are challenging, it is important that they are challenging for all students as opposed to just a few. Therefore, this descriptor relates closely to *Teacher Knowledge of Students*.

The descriptor, “incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts,” relates to the use of materials beyond a textbook. A teacher may use manipulatives that are provided by the curriculum tool kits. These would still be considered resources beyond the school curriculum *text*. This may also include the use of photographs, novels, picture books, personal artifacts, etc.

The last descriptor under the exemplary category includes the word *sometimes*. Therefore, the expectation would not be for all of these to be included all of the time.

Questions to Ask When Increasing Student Participation

When beginning to develop these skills, teachers may ask the questions below as they observe a lesson or after they teach a lesson themselves:

1. Students’ attention: How will I maintain all students’ attention during the lesson? (list)
2. Student-to-student interaction: How will I allow for meaningful student-to-student interaction? (list)
3. Student curiosity: How will I deliberately set the conditions for students to demonstrate curiosity?
4. Choices: How will I provide students with significant choices related to the content?
5. Creating: How will children create and self-monitor their own learning?

After answering these questions, teachers should always ask what impact each of these will have on student achievement and what will be the evidence for this.

EXAMPLE 1: DESIGNING A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES

A teacher assessed students and realized that they were experiencing difficulty in making inferences. Not only was this a critical reading comprehension skill, but also a skill tested on the standardized test. Her objective was: “By the end of this lesson you will be able to identify details in text and use your own experiences to develop an appropriate inference.” Next, she looked at the descriptors related to content when she began to design her lesson. She designed her lesson with several activities:

EXAMPLE 1: DESIGNING A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES continued

- Students were to work in pairs to identify details from the text that connected to the inference question asked.
- Each student would think of an experience or prior knowledge they had that connected to the text and then pair/share this with a partner.
- Each student would complete a graphic organizer with this information.
- Each student would write the inference and include a reflection on how the process had been supportive in making an appropriate inference.

After the activities were designed, the teacher used select descriptors to be certain that students were involved in the referenced activities:

1. Support: The activities supported the objective for students to make an inference.
2. Thinking: She determined that when students are asked to infer, they are thinking at a higher level. A question she was sure to ask was: "How did you develop your inference? Why was it appropriate?"
3. Reflection: There was time for reflection in the lesson when the students were told to reflect on how the process had supported them.
4. Relevant: By using their own experiences and/or background knowledge, the lesson became relevant to the students since they had opportunities to make connections to the text.
5. Interaction: Students also had opportunities for student-to-student interaction when they paired/shared.
6. Curiosity: Student curiosity and suspense would be provided as students would continue reading text or conducting research to learn if their inference was correct.
7. Choices: Students were provided choices for the connections they would make to the text and the supporting details they would identify that connected to the inference question.

EXAMPLE 2: PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH CHOICES

One teacher reflected upon each lesson after school by using the questions on the previous page. She noted that she could not consistently think of many instances when students made significant choices. The following week she added two opportunities for students to make significant content-related choices: 1) Students could develop a summary using any media; and 2) Students were able to choose whether to write prose or poetry for an assignment. During her reflection, she admitted that she saw some enthusiasm expressed by several of her students who were otherwise passive. In analyzing the student work, she found that several students who normally performed on a lower level were able to show mastery of the skill when provided choices for how they would meet the objective. She then began developing other ways to provide students with choices in future lessons. She found students were able to provide evidence of mastery in a way that supported their own strengths or intelligence.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS

- How do you decide on the types of materials you will use during a lesson?
- How do you decide on the types of activities you will use during a lesson?
- How do you develop activities that are aligned to the learning objective?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- Professional development time should be spent on modeling the use of materials and activities that support student success as they relate to the new learning in professional development. An expectation of an effective professional development leader is that he/she would come to meetings prepared with appropriate materials and activities that have been applied to teachers' students. By vetting strategies prior to teaching them to teachers in professional development, leaders should have identified and developed the materials that are required to make the strategy successful for the students represented by teachers. In developing these, a leader should refer to the descriptors under *Activities and Materials*, as well as the needs of the students.
- When teachers participate in professional development activities and/or are given materials to read, they should all be aligned with the professional development outcome of increasing teacher instructional proficiency to address a specific student need. The same premise is true during the development portion of professional development, where the focus of the activities should be on preparing teachers to effectively teach the strategy in the classroom while utilizing all the critical attributes highlighted during the model.

Questioning

Questioning is an art form that reveals a great deal about a teacher's effectiveness. The rubric descriptors provide a basic framework for the types of questions to ask within a lesson and how teachers should lead students in responding to questions.

Exemplary Descriptors for Questioning

1. Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing a balanced mix of question types:
 - » Knowledge and comprehension;
 - » Application and analysis; and
 - » Creation and evaluation.
2. Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.
3. A high frequency of questions is asked.
4. Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.

5. Questions regularly require active responses.
6. Wait time is consistently provided.
7. The teacher calls on volunteers and nonvolunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and gender.
8. Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

The descriptors for *Questioning* can be classified into two main categories:

1. Procedural Questioning Descriptors

Several of the descriptors are focused on simple procedural operations that are easy to develop. These descriptors are:

1. A high frequency of questions is asked.
2. Wait time is consistently provided.
3. The teacher calls on volunteers and nonvolunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and gender.

EXAMPLES:

It may benefit teachers trying to include these descriptors in a lesson to write students' names on Popsicle sticks or strips of paper and pull a name to respond to the questions asked. Teachers may also assign numbers to students and use a deck of playing cards to call on students by their numbers. Students may also choose classmates to call upon. These types of methods help a teacher avoid repeatedly calling on the same students or calling only on volunteers who may have their hands raised. Teachers may also have students respond to a partner before answering a question aloud for the whole class. This method can provide a way to hold each student accountable for formulating a response and sharing their answer with someone else. When providing wait time for students, it is important for the teacher to label this for students so that he/she may use the opportunity to teach students how to provide wait time for one another.

2. Content-Related Descriptors

Four descriptors listed for questioning are related to the intricate use of a variety of questions to support student learning. These indicators are:

1. Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing a balanced mix of question types:
 - » Knowledge and comprehension;
 - » Application and analysis; and
 - » Creation and evaluation.
2. Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.
3. Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
4. Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

When a teacher effectively utilizes questions that are purposeful and coherent, then students' responses may be utilized as a formative assessment in determining which students have mastered the learning objective (*Standards and Objectives*).

For support in generating questions, refer to Bloom's Taxonomy. It is important to note how the use of higher-order questions will impact the evidence for the descriptors under *Thinking*.

The effective teacher does not limit the use of questions in a lesson to only teacher-generated questions, but guides students in generating questions that support their own learning. In leading students to generate their own questions, it is also important for them to have knowledge of the different question types. These can be modeled for them through the teacher's questions and through a purposeful teaching of Bloom's Taxonomy.

EXAMPLE:

When a teacher introduces a lesson, students may be led to complete a "KWL chart." By doing this, each student has the opportunity to generate questions that he/she wants answered as the content is being presented. Students may also generate questions about a topic they are researching. For example, students may be writing biographies on significant figures of the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher provides specific information that must be included in the biography and also allows students to generate questions they would like to learn about the individual. Both sets of questions would guide the student's research. By providing opportunities for students to generate questions, teachers also develop learning experiences where inquiry is valued (*Motivating Students*) and provide students with choices (*Activities and Materials*).

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON QUESTIONING

- How do you decide on the types and frequency of questions you ask during a lesson?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher-order questions during a lesson?
- How do you provide opportunities for all students to respond to your questions?
- How do you provide for wait time during a lesson?
- What is the purpose for a teacher to provide wait time?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- It is important for leaders of professional development to continually question teachers on a higher level as a means of modeling the use of higher-level questions. While doing this, it is also effective to have teachers identify the level on Bloom's Taxonomy to which the questions align. By doing this, leaders can assess teachers' understanding of Bloom's Taxonomy.
- When asking questions in professional development, leaders also need to model the use of wait time. A leader may tell teachers that he/she just wants them to think about their response for a few seconds before responding. Then ask the teachers how the use of the "think time" or wait time supported them in formulating a response.
- Teachers may also pair/share their responses as a model for what they can do with their students in the classroom. This method also supports teachers in developing a variety of ways to require active responses.
- Just as teachers use questioning to assess student understanding, leaders should ask teachers questions to build connections between the new learning being modeled and the teachers' own students and personal instruction needs. The leader should also use questions to informally assess teachers' understanding of the new learning and use that information to inform the type of follow-up support being provided.

Academic Feedback

This indicator focuses on how teachers respond to students' comments and questions. The descriptors address the quality of the feedback in supporting student learning as opposed to feedback that only informs students of the accurateness of their responses. Additionally, these descriptors address how a teacher uses student feedback to make adjustments in instruction.

Exemplary Descriptors for Academic Feedback

1. Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality.
2. Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review.
3. The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress, and provide individual feedback.
4. Feedback from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction.
5. Teacher engages students in giving specific and high-quality feedback to one another.

Feedback Descriptors Focused on Quality

The checklist below provides information that helps teachers develop the ability to provide high-quality feedback. The rubric references "high-quality" feedback in two descriptors (1 and 5). Without consensus on what high-quality feedback is, the rubric cannot be scored accurately. There are many instructional leaders who feel that a classroom observer should be able to "guess" what the objective for the lesson is by simply listening to a teacher's feedback during a lesson. Such precision must be developed using the criteria below.

Checklist for Determining Quality of Feedback:

- » Feedback relates to the lesson objective or sub-objective.
- » Feedback causes students to think.
- » Feedback is specific.
- » Feedback is timely.
- » Feedback is varied to meet the unique needs of the students and classroom.

Descriptor 1 references the use of oral and written feedback. However, evidence for this descriptor may be present if the teacher consistently provides high-quality oral feedback as opposed to procedural, superficial oral and written feedback.

EXAMPLE:

The objective of a lesson was: "Boys and girls, today you will learn about one way to form a paragraph. We formulate a topic sentence and at least three supporting sentences. Then we end the paragraph with a summary statement." She provided a graphic organizer after they collectively developed a topic sentence. While children wrote the supporting details independently, she provided feedback. The following feedback was recorded:

EXAMPLE: continued

- “Marie, very nice sentences because they include strong details.”
- “Henry, your first detail is a complete sentence. That’s just great. Look at your second detail. What can we add to make a complete sentence?”
- “Louise, if you would like more inspiration, let’s look at the story for paragraph details. Good. It’s right there. I think you will find some great material for writing details.”
- “Jamie, you have three details that will make a great paragraph. What will make a good summary statement?”

It is also important for teachers to model for students how to provide each other with high-quality academic feedback.

EXAMPLE:

Following the same lesson objective as provided in the above example. After the students have completed their writing, the teacher pairs them for the purpose of conferencing on each other’s writing. To ensure students know her expectations for the conferences, she pairs with a student and models the questions and type of feedback she would provide to the student. Within this model she explains that it is important for students to clearly explain why an area of the writing is strong and why another needs to be strengthened. She does this by providing high-quality feedback that is focused on the lesson objective of writing a topic sentence, supporting details, and summary statement. Along with this model, the teacher may also include written feedback on the student’s writing that is focused on the objective.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON ACADEMIC FEEDBACK

- How do you decide on the type of feedback you provide to students?
- How do you use student feedback to make adjustments in your instruction?
- How do you engage students in providing quality feedback to one another?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When modeling new learning in professional development, a leader may provide specific examples of students’ comments from his/her vetting of the strategy and the feedback he/she provided in response to these comments. Along with these examples, a leader would need to provide the thought process or purpose he/she used in deciding on the type of feedback provided to students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING continued

- Leaders also model the use of academic feedback by providing it to teachers when they ask questions or make comments. Leaders may use paraphrasing and summarizing of teachers' comments to deepen the learning for all teachers. When doing this, it is important for leaders to label this type of feedback to ensure teachers make connections for how a leader's feedback supports their own learning.
- During development time, teachers can work together to provide feedback to each other regarding each teacher's planning and/or presentation of the strategy. Leaders should be modifying their feedback to teachers based on each teacher's proficiency with the strategy and make appointments for follow-up based on these observations.

Grouping Students

This indicator deals with the instructional arrangements of the students during a given lesson. It focuses on how the students will be grouped for the instruction and activities of the lesson and how they will be held accountable for the work they are expected to complete.

Exemplary Descriptors for Grouping Students

1. The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency.
2. All students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations.
3. All students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work.
4. Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to best accomplish the goals of the lesson.
5. Instructional groups facilitate opportunities for students to set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning.

Structuring Learning Groups

Indicators 1, 2, 3, and 4 focus on structuring learning groups. For teachers learning how to implement grouping that enhances learning, these descriptors are a good place to start when planning.

When placing children into groups, the teacher must be able to assure that every student is actively engaged. This can be done by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities.

EXAMPLE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During an observation, a teacher placed students into learning groups. She assigned four roles to groups of four students. Unfortunately, two of the roles were so contrived that students perceived them as purposeless. The roles of “time manager” and “encourager” had no relevant responsibilities and the teacher’s expectations for these roles were not explained or modeled. When she walked around, about half the students were not engaged in the activity. The next time this teacher tried grouping, she looked at the learning objective for the lesson and identified all of the components needed for successful mastery and developed the group roles based on these components. By focusing on the learning objective, she was able to develop meaningful roles and divide the “work load” evenly. In addition, the teacher modeled the expectations for each role and provided a visual identifying the responsibilities for each individual role. This time, when she circulated among the groups, she noted full participation.

The following example illustrates specific examples of roles that may be assigned to group members. A science teacher is having students work in groups to conduct an experiment. Each group is expected to illustrate the results of the experiment and present recorded data. There are four members in each group and the following roles are assigned: Materials Manager, Illustrator, Data Recorder, and Task Manager. Each role is clearly defined and explained by the teacher to ensure that all students understand the expectations.

Questions to Ask When Designing Accountability

- » What outcome do I expect students to accomplish by the end of each group session?
- » How will I provide quality feedback on progress? By group? By individual?
- » How will I record this information in a grade book and/or student record?
- » How will I use this information as a formative assessment?
- » Is this work expectation appropriate for small groups? Whole group? Individual?

EXAMPLE: GROUP WORK EXPECTATIONS AND GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE

A teacher implemented group learning using centers in her classroom. She often did this but complained about the noise. When her classroom was observed, it was evident how she could increase proficiency. Children moved from one center to another when the bell rang. There was no expectation for what the students were to accomplish at the centers. The teacher realized how important it was to have clear expectations and accountability for what students did in groups independently. By answering the following “Suggested Coaching Questions on Grouping,” she was able to construct reasonable outcomes for each center. She provided feedback on student performance and a chart was placed at each center. This chart provided ongoing feedback to students about what they needed to accomplish. The teacher was also able to provide valuable information to the parents.

There must be a rationale for why students are grouped together. There are a variety of grouping patterns, including:

- » By heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping of ability
- » By demographic balance
- » By interest
- » By ability to focus
- » By ability to communicate
- » By language acquisition levels

Regardless of how the grouping arrangements are developed, the grouping should *enhance* the learning for all students. The ability of a teacher to group students in this manner is directly connected to his/her knowledge of the students; their individual needs, interests, and abilities.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON GROUPING

- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?
- How do you hold groups and individuals accountable for work completed within a group?
- How do you decide on the roles individuals will have when working in groups?
- How do you communicate your expectations to students for their own work and that of the group?
- How do you assess the performance of groups and individuals when it is completed in a group setting?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When modeling new learning in professional development, a leader can include grouping of the teachers as a means of modeling specific descriptors from this indicator. It is important for teachers to reflect on how the grouping arrangement impacted their own learning.
- When vetting a strategy, leaders need to identify how grouping of students enhances the instruction. The identified grouping arrangement then becomes a critical attribute of the strategy. The way in which the groups need to be arranged and the purpose for the grouping arrangements need to be clearly explained during the leader's modeling of the new learning. This would also include how the leader held individual students and groups accountable during vetting of the strategy.
- Teachers may also work in pairs or groups during the development of the new learning. If teachers are selecting passages as part of the development, then one teacher may select a passage appropriate for below-grade-level readers and another teacher may select a passage for above-grade-level readers, then share both these passages for use in their classrooms.

Teacher Content Knowledge

This indicator addresses the teacher's knowledge of the content he/she is teaching, as well as their ability to implement strategies to support student learning. Also addressed in this indicator is the teacher's ability to connect the content being taught to other ideas and concepts.

Exemplary Descriptors for Teacher Content Knowledge

1. Teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches.
2. Teacher regularly implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.
3. Teacher regularly highlights key concepts and ideas, and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas.
4. Limited content is taught in sufficient depth to allow for the development of understanding.

EXAMPLE 1: TEACHER HIGHLIGHTS KEY CONCEPTS AND CONNECTS TO OTHER POWERFUL IDEAS

A teacher is conducting a lesson on immigration in the 1860s and relates immigration from the time period to the present day. News articles about immigrants and refugees are presented during class. Students select someone they know who has immigrated to the United States to interview. Comparisons are made between immigrants of the 1860s and immigrants of today (reasons for immigrating, countries of origin, experiences, etc.). By connecting immigration of the 1860s to immigration of the present day, having students interview immigrants, and debate the impact of immigrants in their community, the teacher has highlighted key concepts and connected them to more powerful ideas.

EXAMPLE 2: TEACHER HIGHLIGHTS KEY CONCEPTS AND CONNECTS TO OTHER POWERFUL IDEAS

Groups of students are studying the circulatory and respiratory systems. During their study of how the two systems function and support each other, they also study diseases of the two systems. The teacher has students utilize the information they have gained to develop plans for a healthy lifestyle, which could help prevent heart attacks, lung cancer, etc. Students present their plans to other students and to the school administration. They also use the plans to develop a healthy menu for the school cafeteria.

By leading students to connect to these other ideas and concepts, a teacher provides evidence of his/her knowledge of the content being taught and ability to utilize a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to teach the content.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON TEACHER CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

- How do you prepare yourself to teach (insert the specific topic taught)?
- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach (insert the specific topic being taught)?
- How do you decide on the ways in which you will connect the content being taught to more powerful ideas?
- What are some other ideas to which you could have connected during the lesson?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When modeling new learning in professional development, a leader needs to explain and model how he/she led students to connect other powerful ideas during the lesson. Examples of ways this can be done need to be provided for the teachers during the modeling. Then teachers can incorporate these into their development of the new learning.
- Leaders always need to display their own knowledge of the content as they model. For this reason, it is beneficial when leaders are modeling a strategy targeting a reading comprehension skill to model it within a science, social studies, or math content lesson. By embedding a reading strategy within the content area, a leader is able to display content knowledge, but also model how to connect to other ideas and concepts.

Teacher Knowledge of Students

This indicator deals with how well a teacher knows his/her students and their learning styles and interests. Therefore, it is closely connected to the indicator, *Motivating Students*.

Exemplary Descriptors for Teacher Knowledge of Students

1. Teacher practices display an understanding of each student's anticipated learning difficulties.
2. Teacher practices regularly incorporate student interests and cultural heritage.
3. Teacher regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught.

Descriptors 1 and 3 address a teacher's ability to meet students' learning needs. These descriptors connect closely to the descriptor, "pacing is brisk," and provide many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates under *Lesson Structure and Pacing*. Descriptor 2 deals with a teacher's ability to connect the content being taught to the interests and background of the students. Therefore, these descriptors relate closely to the descriptor, "the teacher consistently organizes the content so that is personally meaningful and relevant to students," under *Motivating Students*.

Differentiated instruction may include activities to address auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning styles or it may include providing students with choices in assignments that relate to the multiple intelligences. It may also mean that teachers provide students with extended time to complete assignments or abbreviate assignments based on student need.

EXAMPLE:

During a lesson on the solar system, the teacher displays a poster of the planets, students act out the alignment of the planets, and the class reads an article on one of the planets. Within this lesson, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners' needs are addressed.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON TEACHER KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS

- How do you identify the learning styles of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you identify the interests of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When a leader regularly refers to the characteristics of student work from his/her vetting of a strategy and from teachers' presentations, he/she is able to identify and model modifications to a strategy based on the anticipated learning difficulties of students. These modifications should then be incorporated into the development of the new learning by the teachers, which provides ways for them to include descriptors 1 and 3 into their lessons.
- A leader includes in his/her modeling of the new learning how to incorporate students' interests and cultural heritage. Specific examples are provided and modeled. A leader may also incorporate the interests and heritage of the teachers into the modeling as a way to provide teachers with what descriptor 2 looks like and sounds like in the classroom. When doing this, a leader should label, or have the teachers label, what has been modeled and the importance for relating to their interests.

Thinking

Thinking is something that can and should apply to every observation of a teacher.

Exemplary Descriptors for Thinking

The teacher thoroughly teaches two or more types of thinking:

1. Analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information;
2. Practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-world scenarios;
3. Creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and
4. Research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.

The teacher provides opportunities where students:

5. Generate ideas and alternatives;
6. Analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints; and
7. Monitor their thinking to ensure that they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using and why.

Descriptors 1 through 4 discuss the four types of thinking that teachers are expected to implement regularly and consistently. These thinking types were compiled based on twenty years of research by the most prominent psychologists in America.

Descriptor 1: Analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information

Most teachers focus only on analytical thinking in their classrooms. This type of thinking demands that students analyze, evaluate, and explain phenomena. Analyzing, evaluating, and explaining information is a skill that applies to all disciplines and is critical for an informed and educated society.

EXAMPLE 1: ANALYTICAL THINKING

In language arts a class is reading *Charlotte's Web*. Through a Venn Diagram, the class compares and contrasts Wilbur's personality traits with those of Charlotte. Next, the teacher asks the students to analyze the text and find specific words that provide evidence of the character traits the student listed. For the final part of this assignment, the teacher asks students to explain why Charlotte chose to help Wilbur and what each child would do if he or she were Charlotte.

EXAMPLE 2: ANALYTICAL THINKING

Students are studying a specific artist's work. They are asked to observe a painting and identify one thing in the painting or element of the painting that could be removed that would not alter the artist's intent. Students may also be asked to explain what the painting reveals about the artist's attitude towards life, war, nature, etc.

Descriptor 2: Practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-world scenarios

Many students often do not see the connections between what they learn in school and how they can use this knowledge in the real world. Teachers who integrate practical thinking into their teaching design learning activities where students are forced to use and apply concepts and ideas that they learn. In this way, this descriptor connects to the descriptor, "the teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students," under *Motivating Students*.

EXAMPLE 1: PRACTICAL THINKING

A class is working on measurement. Often teachers have students measure various objects in the room. While this has students apply the concept of measurement, the utility and relevance of how measurement works in the real world is not clear. Instead, the teacher informs students that they will be building tree and plant boxes throughout the school. These planters will be various shapes and sizes and will require students to not only measure and cut different pieces of wood to build them, but also to estimate the sizes of the correct plants and bushes to put in them.

EXAMPLE 2: PRACTICAL THINKING

A group of students is fed up with the cafeteria food and they have decided to do something about it. First, they research what the necessary requirements are for a healthy lunch. Next, they design a menu for two weeks. Finally, they create the shopping list and pricing list to ensure that the lunches they are requesting are affordable. After working through each of these issues, the students present their menu, shopping list, and pricing list to the school board. Their proposal is negotiated and some items on the menu change.

Descriptor 3: Creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose

Children have wonderful imaginations and love to create, design, and invent. In school, however, they are often told to follow strict rules, adhere to criteria, and provide the one correct answer, not necessarily the most creative one. By teaching students to create, design, and imagine, teachers prepare students for the flexible and creative thinking they will need to exercise later in life.

EXAMPLES: CREATE AND DESIGN

- Design a food chain with imaginary animals. Provide a rationale for where each animal fits.
- Create a survey to determine the favorite food of students in your school.
- Design a new playground for the school and make sure your drawing is to scale.
- Rewrite the *Bill of Rights*.
- Create a classroom constitution.
- Create a three-dimensional map of your state.
- Suppose George Washington was never born. Write about what America might be like today without him.
- Create a song or develop new words for an existing melody.
- Create a football or basketball play during a physical education class.

Descriptor 4: Research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems

In the midst of the information age, students need to know not only how to research to find information, but also how to review a variety of ideas and come to solutions that are well-supported and make sense.

EXAMPLES: RESEARCH-BASED THINKING

- Research six different professions and describe the benefits and pitfalls of each.
- Research three sources of alternative energy and, based on your analysis of each, recommend the most fruitful source.
- Research the staple foods from countries in three different continents, and describe why those foods are so pervasive.

EXAMPLE: RESEARCH-BASED THINKING, ANALYTICAL THINKING, AND PRACTICAL THINKING

During a study of the Jim Crow laws, students also conduct a study of Civil Rights laws. They then compare and contrast the two different groups of laws, identifying strengths and weaknesses. After comparing and contrasting the laws, they debate the need for present laws to ensure all citizens have equal rights and create the wording for these laws.

Descriptor 5: The teacher provides opportunities for students to generate ideas and alternatives

One element of sound thinking and creativity is the ability to generate many ideas and consider many alternatives and possibilities. This type of thinking is rarely employed in classrooms, but there are some simple ways to provide for students to generate lots of ideas and consider alternatives in nearly every subject.

EXAMPLE: GENERATE IDEAS

Before beginning a unit on deserts, a teacher asks students to independently list on a sheet of paper all the plants, animals, and attributes of the desert they can identify.

EXAMPLE: GENERATE ALTERNATIVES

When solving a fraction problem, a math teacher asks students to generate different ways to solve the problem and different ways to represent their answers.

EXAMPLE: GENERATE IDEAS AND ALTERNATIVES

A science teacher has students conduct experiments about which variables lead to maximum plant growth. One group tests different types of light, one tests different types of liquids, one tests different types of soil, and one combines what students hypothesize to be the best of each. In this example, students not only generate ideas about which variables to test, but also consider many alternative explanations.

Descriptor 6: The teacher provides opportunities where students analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints

This descriptor, much like descriptor 5, applies to many disciplines. As children get older, if they do not learn to consider other peoples' points of view and are not provided with opportunities to look at problems from several perspectives, their thinking is severely restricted. Getting students to consider multiple perspectives provides them opportunities to learn how those different than themselves may view problems and solutions.

EXAMPLES: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES AND VIEWPOINTS

- A social studies class studies the Civil War by reading letters from soldiers from the North and South.
- An art class studies predominant symbols in Western art and Eastern art and compares and contrasts the two art forms.
- A physical education and math class work together to conduct a survey on children's favorite sports, then analyzes the data by grade level, gender, and race. They also discuss the factors affecting the data to further develop their understanding of the similarities and differences between grade levels, gender, and race.

Descriptor 7: The teacher provides opportunities for students to monitor their thinking to ensure they understand what they are learning and that they are aware of the learning strategies they are using

Research has shown that monitoring and thinking about one's thinking leads to better academic performance, behavior, and on-task engagement. There are many ways in which teachers can be explicit about reminding children what learning strategy to use, when to use it, and how students can begin to use it on their own.

EXAMPLE: MONITORING THINKING

When reading, a teacher stops at critical points in the passage and reminds students that good readers summarize what they have read. She models how to summarize by modeling her own thinking and later calls on students to engage in this behavior.

Over the course of the year, the teacher models her thinking out loud for students. As the teacher reads, she says, "I've read a lot here. I better stop to summarize so I can remember and use what I am learning."

The teacher makes her thinking explicit in the same way when she clarifies words she does not understand. She reminds students as they read that good readers clarify words that they do not know or understand. As she reads, she stops and says to herself, "I don't understand this word, let me look for context clues, let me ask a partner, let me go to the dictionary, or let me make a note of it and return to it later."

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON THINKING

See "Suggested Coaching Questions on Problem Solving," the next indicator.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

During modeling of a strategy, the leader should identify the types of thinking he/she taught when vetting the strategy. For example, a leader may be modeling the use of a Venn Diagram to increase student achievement in comparing and contrasting. During the modeling of the strategy, the leader should make reference to how the strategy teaches analytical thinking.

Problem Solving

Developing multiple skills in problem solving enriches the learner's ability to manage complex tasks and higher levels of learning. By providing opportunities for students to practice many different approaches to solving problems, the teacher empowers the student with an important life skill.

Exemplary Descriptors for Problem Solving

The teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce three or more of the following problem-solving types:

1. Abstraction
2. Categorization
3. Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions
4. Predicting Outcomes
5. Observing and Experimenting
6. Improving Solutions
7. Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information
8. Generating Ideas
9. Creating and Designing

Descriptor 1: Abstraction

Abstraction is the process of leaving out of consideration one or more properties of a complex object so as to attend to others. For example, when the mind considers the form of a tree by itself or the color of the leaves as separate from their size or figure, the act is called abstraction.

Abstraction is also applied when students take the key components or ideas occurring across given examples and use that idea to solve a new problem.

EXAMPLE: ABSTRACTION

After reading *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Little Red Riding Hood*, students will create a list of four qualities that define "fairytaleness."

Descriptor 2: Categorization

Students analyze information, classify it, and sort it into meaningful categories.

EXAMPLE 1: CATEGORIZATION

Students develop categories in which to sort vocabulary words. The categories may be common meanings, spelling patterns, parts of speech, etc.

EXAMPLE 2: CATEGORIZATION

In math, students are studying polygons. They will first define the essential characteristics of a polygon, and then sort the following list into examples and non-examples of polygons. Essential characteristics are “closed, plane figure, straight sides, more than two sides, two-dimensional, and made of line segments.”

Circle	Cone	Cube	Cylinder
Heptagon	Hexagon	Parallelogram	Pentagon
Quadrilateral	Ray	Rectangle	Rhombus
Sphere	Square	Trapezoid	

Descriptor 3: Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions

Students draw conclusions based on data presented to them in many forms, viewpoints, perspectives, and quality.

De Bono (1994)¹ states that there are three levels of conclusions at which the mind can arrive:

1. A specific answer, idea, or opinion;
2. A full harvesting of all that has been achieved, including, for example, a listing of ideas considered; and
3. An objective look at the “thinking” that has been used.

EXAMPLE 1: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Examples of each of the three levels are represented below.

After reading and discussing the events leading up to the Boston Tea Party, students will:

1. Write a paragraph expressing which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection.
2. Debate, then decide which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection, then prepare a written summary with careful notes of all major points.
3. After hearing debate and deciding which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection, students will write a reflective paragraph as to the process they went through in making their final decision.

EXAMPLE 2: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Student teams shop for the best buy on candy at the local grocery store. Students gather prices, size/weight of packages, and desirability of the candy. Each team computes price per ounce/gram and where each falls on a 1-10 desirability scale. They then analyze their data and determine which candy is the best buy for their team and provide evidence for their choice. This activity also requires students to justify a solution.

1. De Bono, Edward. (1994). *De Bono's Thinking Course*. New York, NY: Facts on File.

Children analyze several possible solutions, select the best solution, and justify why that solution is best and why other solutions are less adequate.

EXAMPLE 1: JUSTIFYING SOLUTIONS

After studying the Civil War, students will write editorial articles supporting the Confederate or Union stand.

EXAMPLE 2: JUSTIFYING SOLUTIONS

Students will solve math problems and prove to a partner that their answers are correct. Here is one example:

"If you were to construct a 6 x 6 checkered square, how many total squares would there be?" (Hint: How many 1 x 1 squares, 2 x 2 squares, 3 x 3 squares are present?).

Descriptor 4: Predicting Outcomes

Students make predictions, and then test the validity of those predictions.

EXAMPLE: PREDICTING OUTCOMES

Students are reading *A Rat's Tale*, by Tor Seidler, about two young rats from different socioeconomic levels, whose true love must endure all kinds of adventures and challenges. When Montague decides to save the wharf, students predict and record in their reading journals some possible scenes that may unfold in the story and whether Montague will be successful.

Descriptor 5: Observing and Experimenting

Children observe, record, code, and measure. Children develop hypotheses, gather instruments, then collect and analyze data.

EXAMPLE: OBSERVING AND EXPERIMENTING

After a study of yearly weather patterns, students will keep daily weather records for one month, noting the date, type of weather, temperature, and amount of precipitation. They will create their own rain gauges to measure the precipitation.

EXAMPLE: OBSERVING AND EXPERIMENTING continued

At the end of the month they will determine the median and mean for temperature and precipitation. Using this data and their knowledge of yearly weather patterns, they will hypothesize whether the medians and means for the next month will be the same, higher, or lower. At the end of the second month, students will again analyze their data, compare to the previous month, and either confirm or refute their hypotheses.

Descriptor 6: Improving Solutions

Children are given a solution to a problem, and asked to suggest methods for improving it.

EXAMPLE 1: IMPROVING SOLUTIONS

Students have read a series of *Nate the Great* mysteries. There is a discussion of weak and strong endings. Pairs of students choose one to reread together that they feel has a weak ending. Together they rewrite the ending to give a better explanation that solves the mystery.

EXAMPLE 2: IMPROVING SOLUTIONS

Students studying World War II may choose a specific battle and develop ways it could have been more effectively planned by the losing side to change the outcome.

Descriptor 7: Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information

Students are given relevant and irrelevant information needed to solve a problem. They identify relevant information and use that information to solve a problem.

EXAMPLE 1: IDENTIFYING RELEVANT OR IRRELEVANT INFORMATION

Students reread the fairytale, *Goldilocks*. They are then asked to fill in a "T-chart" with evidence from the story that is relevant or irrelevant to whether or not Goldilocks is a criminal and should be arrested. Finally, they render their verdict.

EXAMPLE 2: IDENTIFYING RELEVANT OR IRRELEVANT INFORMATION

When solving word problems in math, students identify information that is necessary and unnecessary to use in developing their solution.

Descriptor 8: Generating Ideas

Children are given ill-defined problems and taught to look for analogies, to brainstorm, to generate idea lists, to create representations, and to come up with viable solutions.

EXAMPLE: GENERATING IDEAS

Students are in small groups and are presented with the following information after studying the geography of the Southwest U.S. and the water cycle in science:

"It is the year 2010. The Colorado River, which in the past has been a major source of water to Southern California, has dried up. How can we replace this critical source of water?"

Students will generate as many possible solutions as they can, order them from most effective to least, and provide reasoning for deciding which would be their first and last choices.

Descriptor 9: Creating and Designing

Children are asked to create or design a product, an experiment, or a problem for another student to solve or evaluate (e.g. video, cartoon strip, presentation, software application, etc.).

EXAMPLE 1: CREATING AND DESIGNING

Students read *The Legend of Jimmy Spon* by Kristina Gregory. Since this book lacks a map, students will create one showing the locations Jimmy visits with his adopted Shoshone tribe. They can begin with a generic map, which includes Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, to trace Jimmy's travels throughout the book.

EXAMPLE 2: CREATING AND DESIGNING

Students create tutorials in PowerPoint to teach younger students basic information about the continents. Presentations must be at their partner's reading level and include a mini quiz at the end.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

- How do you plan for activities and/or assignments that teach students different types of thinking or problem solving?
- Ask teachers to reflect on the specific activities and/or assignments utilized within the lesson and then identify the type of thinking and/or problem solving each taught. This type of reflection will provide a means for assessing a teacher's understanding of analytical, practical, and research-based thinking, and the types of problem solving referenced under this indicator.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

During modeling of a strategy, the leader should identify the types of problem solving he/she taught when vetting the strategy. For example, a leader may be modeling a strategy to support students in solving mathematical word problems. The new learning may be a chunk of the strategy in which students identify important information they will need to answer the question. The leader would then connect for the teachers how this chunk of the strategy is an example of identifying relevant/irrelevant information under this indicator.

PLANNING

This section includes resources and information on the three indicators under *Planning*:

1. Instructional Plans
2. Student Work
3. Assessment

Instructional Plans

Time spent developing strong lesson plans yields many benefits. Lesson plans contribute to better-managed classrooms and more effective and efficient learning experiences for students.

Instruction in a school using the NIET evaluation system is based heavily on state standards, as well as analysis of formative and summative student assessments. Therefore, it is important that teachers incorporate these into their daily planning.

Exemplary Descriptors for Instructional Plans

Instructional plans include:

1. Measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards;
2. Activities, materials, and assessments that:
 - » Are aligned to state standards.
 - » Are sequenced from basic to complex (teaching of sub-objectives follows a logical progression).
 - » Build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines.
 - » Provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure.
3. Evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners; and
4. Evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.

Evaluating Lesson Plans

It is suggested that administrators and teacher leaders select a system or protocol that provides feedback to teachers on individual lesson plans on a regular basis. This development would be an appropriate activity for a professional development meeting. Administrators and teacher leaders might bring examples of lesson plans to a meeting and analyze various aspects utilizing the rubric (e.g. checking the alignment of activities, materials, and assessments, or evaluating the learning objectives to ensure alignment to state standards). By focusing on specific descriptors of this indicator, administrators and teacher leaders can more narrowly focus their analysis of teachers' lesson plans. Specific written feedback can then be provided to teachers.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS

- Why is aligning the objectives to the standards important?
- Which standards seem the most difficult for students to master? Why do you think students are having difficulty mastering those in particular?
- Which sub-objectives need to be taught for students to master a standard?
- Was there a connection between the students' mastery of the learning objective and the lesson plan?
- How did you decide to choose the activities, materials, and assessments included in this lesson plan?
- How did you plan to accommodate students' individual interests and needs?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

The leader of professional development needs to verbalize connections between the TAP Teaching Standards and instructional practice as he/she models new learning. The leader can do this by identifying the learning objective, student accommodations, and assessment tools from his/her own teaching experience with a strategy.

- Connect the new learning of a strategy to the indicator being targeted to support teachers in developing plans that are aligned to the rubric.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING continued

- Define the learning objective for students as it relates to the strategy and indicator being targeted.
- Develop an assessment that provides teachers with evidence that students have developed proficiency in a specific skill or indicator. Define the criteria for proficiency.
- Like a quality lesson, it is also essential that during professional development meetings: all the activities align to the objective; the new learning builds on previous learning; the new learning directly supports the identified student need; and appropriate pacing exists.

Student Work

The development and observation of student work should enhance and reinforce instruction in the classroom. Student work and/or assignments should be developed so that they are aligned to pre-tests and post-tests, which should be aligned to the high-stakes test.

It is critical that teachers are able to use the analysis of student work as a predictor for how students will perform on post-tests. If students are not progressing properly or progressing more quickly than expected, the teacher's long-range plan should be adjusted to reflect students' changing needs. Teachers may also review examples of student work for the purpose of analyzing characteristics of sub-groups or for isolating reasons students are still not mastering a specific skill by comparing the work to specific and commonly agreed-upon criteria.

Exemplary Descriptors for Student Work

Assignments require students to:

1. Organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it;
2. Draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing; and
3. Connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives, both inside and outside of school.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON STUDENT WORK

- How closely was the student work aligned to the lesson objective and/or state standard?
- How were the criteria for scoring student work communicated to students?
- Why is it important to clearly communicate the criteria for the student work to students prior to their completion of the assignment?
- What types of thinking or problem-solving skills did the work require of the students?
- Using Bloom's Taxonomy, at what level is the student work that was assigned? Is it at the appropriate level considering the students' stage of learning?
- How are the criteria for student work aligned to the standards and high-stakes test? Why is it important that they are aligned?
- How engaged did students appear when they completed the assignment?
- How did the completed work demonstrate the observation criteria? Did most students' work meet the teacher's expectations? If not, what reasons might explain why?
- How are the guidelines for student work going to mesh with the next grade level's guidelines and state standards?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- When vetting a strategy, the leader of professional development develops the expectations for student work that teachers will use as evidence of student mastery.
- The leader of professional development should identify for teachers how the student work was developed and the level of Bloom's Taxonomy at which students will be expected to work. Leaders might also make connections to the descriptors under *Thinking* and *Problem Solving*. Student work that requires higher levels of thinking and problem solving will provide evidence that teachers have met descriptors under *Student Work*.

Assessment

Effective assessment is a fundamental part of instruction and learning. The goal of this section is to provide information and examples of assessment. An effective assessment plan answers the questions, “What do I want my students to be able to do as a result of my teaching?” and “How do I know the students learned what I taught?” When these questions are asked and answered regularly, the teacher can effectively plan, diagnose, and intervene on a continual basis to raise student achievement.

Exemplary Descriptors for Assessment Plans

Assessment plans:

1. Are aligned with state content standards;
2. Have clear measurement criteria;
3. Measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice test);
4. Require extended written tasks;
5. Are portfolio-based with clear illustrations of student progress towards state content standards; and
6. Include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON ASSESSMENT

- What criteria were used in developing or selecting the assessment(s)?
- What types of assessments were used to evaluate student learning?
- How did the assessment(s) used accommodate the needs and interests of individual students?
- How will the results of the assessment(s) be used to impact future instruction?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING

- Model how to assess students’ mastery of the identified skill on which the professional development meeting is focused when teachers implement the strategy in their classrooms.
- Leaders of professional development need to model how they analyzed the results of formative and summative assessments and how they used these results to plan instruction. This analysis should provide direction for the leader in identifying modifications teachers may need to make to the strategy based on the results from his/her vetting of the strategy. If a leader has not analyzed assessments from vetting the strategy, then he/she will not be able to provide a model for the teachers on how to analyze their students’ assessments, nor will leaders be able to clearly explain how they made modifications based upon students’ needs.

ENVIRONMENT

This section includes resources and information on the four indicators under *Environment*:

1. Expectations
2. Managing Student Behavior
3. Environment
4. Respectful Culture

Expectations

Exemplary Descriptors for Expectations

1. Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student.
2. Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes.
3. Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success.
4. Students take initiative and follow through with their own work.
5. Teacher optimizes instructional time, teaches more material, and demands better performance from every student.

The descriptors under this indicator directly connect to descriptors in the *Instruction* domain. For a teacher to include the descriptors under *Expectations*, he/she must have knowledge of the students he/she is teaching. Differentiated instruction methods that are demanding for every student and create opportunities for all students to experience success can only be implemented when a *teacher's knowledge of students* is developed and utilized during instruction. When a teacher sets high and demanding expectations for every student, he/she is also able to develop and/or select *activities and materials* that are challenging. The second descriptor connects to *Motivating Students*. When a teacher regularly reinforces and rewards efforts, students will be encouraged to learn from their mistakes and take risks. A teacher must be able to create a safe learning environment in which students' efforts are reinforced and valued in order for students to experience success. For a teacher to optimize instructional time, he/she must be able to implement lessons that include appropriate *lesson structure and pacing* for students who progress at different learning rates. For additional explanation of these indicators, refer to the pages in this handbook that address each of the indicators under *Instruction*.

Managing Student Behavior

Exemplary Descriptors for Managing Student Behavior

1. Students are consistently well-behaved and on task.
2. Teacher and students establish clear rules for learning and behavior.
3. The teacher uses several techniques, such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences, to maintain appropriate student behavior.
4. The teacher overlooks inconsequential behavior.
5. The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class.
6. The teacher attends to disruptions quickly and firmly.

Resource:

Managing student behavior has generated a huge proliferation of books and workshops. A good website for basic tips and information is Adprima at www.adprima.com/managing.htm. LEARN North Carolina also has great suggestions on classroom management at www.learnnc.org.

Timely and effective management of student behavior is critical for effective instruction to take place within a classroom. Descriptors under *Standards and Objectives* and *Presenting Instructional Content* both address a teacher's modeling of clear expectations for students. While these indicators focus on instruction, expectations must also be clearly modeled for student behavior for effective instruction to occur that increases student achievement. For a teacher to manage student behavior effectively, he/she must not only model the expectations but have *knowledge of the students* he/she is teaching. Teachers must be aware of and practice a variety of techniques to maintain appropriate behavior that are dependent upon having knowledge of individual student's needs. Teachers must also know students' interests in order to motivate them to change inappropriate behaviors. Therefore, this indicator is also connected to *Motivating Students*.

Environment

Exemplary Descriptors for Environment

The classroom:

1. Welcomes all members and guests.
2. Is organized and understandable to all students.
3. Supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible.
4. Displays student work that frequently changes.
5. Is arranged to promote individual and group learning.

This indicator deals with the learning environment of the classroom, including the physical arrangement of the furniture and availability of supplies for students to utilize. When supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible, then the descriptor, "routines for distributing materials are efficient," under *Lesson Structure and Pacing*, can be met.

LEARN North Carolina has a great section on **tips for creating a positive physical environment**. The following checklist from the site can be used for self-observation of a classroom's environment:

- » Various areas of the classroom are created for use in a variety of activities.
- » Desks or general seating is arranged so that the teachers can easily get to each student.
- » The lighting in the room is adequate.
- » The room temperature is generally moderate to cool. Warm classrooms lead students to be more lethargic, inattentive, and consequently bored and disruptive.
- » The entrance to your room does not cause distractions to students during lessons.

- » There is a place in your classroom, away from the rest of the class, where you can have a private conversation or give a private reprimand to an individual student.
- » The blackboard is visible to all students during lessons and is clean and uncluttered.
- » Bulletin boards are attractive and not cluttered with “old work.”
- » The room has just the amount of furniture that is functional and does not contain useless or nonessential furnishings.
- » The seating arrangement is designed in an orderly way so that the organization of the seats helps the students to feel more organized.
- » Study carrels are used only in conjunction with other types of seating arrangements.
- » Students are seated far enough apart so that innocent moves by students don’t distract other students.
- » Seats are arranged in such a way as to reduce traffic distractions. For example, as students get up to go to the bathroom or pencil sharpener, they do not overly distract students they pass.
- » Make sure that students have assigned seats, and don’t allow them to constantly change their seats.

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- Is the room welcoming? What evidence is there that indicates that it is?
- Is it conducive to student independence (e.g., can they get their own paper, is the pencil sharpener located in a logical place)?
- Is a variety of student work posted on the bulletin boards? Or just the best?
- Is the room arranged to promote individual and group work? Can the classroom accommodate different grouping patterns?
- Is the information students need posted so they can use it (e.g., the standards, the goals for the day, the schedule/agenda)?
- What are the biggest challenges to having your classroom set up as you would like?
- What might be some solutions?
- How do you plan and rotate the work on your bulletin boards so that all students have an opportunity to have their work displayed?

Respectful Culture

Exemplary Descriptors for Respectful Culture

1. Teacher-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect for one another.
2. Students exhibit caring and respect for one another.
3. Teacher seeks out and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students.
4. Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom.

Creating a positive classroom climate begins with showing respect to one another. Teachers most often set this in motion when they develop a set of collaborative ground rules for their classrooms and then model these for the students on a regular basis.

Teacher non-verbal cues that indicate respect and interest are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| » Tone of voice | » Smiles |
| » Eye contact | » Wait time |
| » Affirmative head nods | » Proximity to student |

SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS ON RESPECTFUL CULTURE

- Are the students empowered to make decisions?
- Are they interdependent?
- Do they have opportunities to collaborate?
- Are the students listening to each other?
- Do students feel safe sharing their feelings and thoughts with each other?
- Do students exhibit patience and respect with their peers?
- Do they handle supplies in a respectful and orderly manner?

PRE-CONFERENCE PLAN

Prior to announced observations, observers conduct a pre-conference meeting to obtain pertinent background information about the lesson plan and students involved for additional context, and to address any potential areas of concern before the lesson. During the pre-conference, the teacher being observed engages in a coaching conversation with the observer. As part of this conversation, the observer asks questions about the lesson plan, grouping structures, classroom configuration, specific students, etc. The teacher provides background information, including the makeup of the students in the class; the context of this lesson in the larger unit plan; assessment information; extenuating circumstances; and evidence of planning with the rubrics. In the pre-conference meeting, teachers are provided with specific support for improvement, if necessary.

Below are pre-conference tips based on good conferencing.

General Tips

- » Sit next to the teacher with whom you are conferencing and maintain eye contact
- » Nod and show signs of active listening, including writing down some of the responses that the teacher gives
- » Paraphrase what the teacher is saying in order to demonstrate active listening; provide an internal summary at the end
- » It is the observer's responsibility to redirect a teacher during the pre-conference if their instructional plan is inappropriate
- » Adjust your questioning and use the teacher's responses to develop probing follow-up questions
- » When the teacher demonstrates reflection accurately, build off of their responses in order to guide them to specific areas of reinforcement and refinement (as appropriate) without explicitly labeling their area of reinforcement and refinement for them

Sample Pre-Conference Questions

- » What is the objective of your lesson?
- » What do you expect the students to know and be able to do after the lesson?
- » Where is this lesson in the context of your unit plan?
- » What are the prerequisite skills that the students have to know in order to be successful in this lesson?
- » What changes or adjustments to the lesson will you need to make if students do not show evidence that they have mastered the sub-objectives?
- » How will you know that students have mastered the objectives in this lesson?
- » Is there anything else you want me to be aware of before going to look at the lesson tomorrow?
- » Are there any other special circumstances that I should be aware of before the announced observation?
- » How will you differentiate your instruction in order to address a variety of learning styles?
- » Are there any particular grouping structures in place? If so, how will you hold students accountable for group work?
- » Is there anything in particular you want me to be observing with regard to your areas of reinforcement and refinement?
- » What are your plans for lesson closure and reflection?

POST-CONFERENCE PLAN

While the TAP Teaching Standards are used to evaluate teachers' lesson planning and instruction, their primary purpose is to provide the basis of support teachers receive for their own professional growth. This support should be provided in numerous ways from administrators and/or teacher leaders, including the modeling of specific indicators in professional development meetings, in teachers' classrooms, and in the post-conference. Modeling of the indicators in professional development meetings was previously addressed in "Explanation of the TAP Teaching Standards." The post-conference will be addressed in this section.

The purpose of the post-conference is to provide teachers opportunities to self-reflect on their lessons with guidance and support from the administrator or teacher leader who conducted the observation. This guidance should be provided through the use of leading questions by the observer, along with the identification of an area of reinforcement (relative strength of the lesson) and an area of refinement (area in which the observer needs to help the teacher improve). Therefore, the focus of the post-conference is on two indicators or descriptors from the rubric as opposed to multiple areas. By focusing on just two areas, teachers have the opportunity to segment their own learning with support from an administrator or teacher leader. Examples of coaching questions corresponding to each indicator on the rubrics can be found in "Explanation of the TAP Teaching Standards."

When choosing an area of reinforcement and refinement from the rubric, observers should ask themselves several guiding questions to ensure that a teacher's professional growth will have the maximum impact on the achievement of his/her own students.

Hints and Questions for Choosing Reinforcement and Refinement Objectives

- » Which areas on the rubric received the highest scores (reinforcements) and the lowest scores (refinements)?
- » Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on student achievement?
- » Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on other areas of the rubric?
- » In which area will the teacher have the most potential for growth? For example, with new teachers it might be better to focus on developing objectives and sub-objectives instead of improving a teacher's ability to teach problem solving.
- » Make sure that the reinforcement is not directly related to the refinement. The reason is that if you choose a refinement that is directly related to the reinforcement, it would be like saying, "Your questioning was great, but there were no higher-order questions."
- » Choose a refinement area for which you have sufficient and specific evidence from the lesson to support why the teacher needs to work in this area.
- » Select refinement topics with which you have personal knowledge and teaching experience. There is nothing worse than telling a teacher they need to alter their practice and then not being able to provide specific examples for how this can be done or modeling these examples for them.

Once the areas of reinforcement and refinement have been selected, then the post-conference is developed. Below is a format for developing an effective post-conference. It is important to note that **a post-conference does not begin with a presentation of the scores**, but with coaching questions that, through reflection, lead to the identification of the areas of reinforcement and refinement.

Post-Conference Introduction

1. **Greeting/Set the tone.** This time should be used to put the teacher at ease.
2. **Establish the length of the conference.** Ensure the teacher that you respect his/her time and have set a time limit for the conference.

3. **Review conference process.** Review the conference format with the teacher so he/she knows what to expect.

Example: "Good afternoon, it was great for me to get to visit your classroom today and observe your lesson. Our purpose in meeting today is for professional growth. We will spend time discussing your lesson with a focus on your instruction and how the students were involved with the lesson. The ultimate goal will be to develop ideas on how to enhance student achievement."

4. **Ask a general impression question.** This allows the teacher to begin the post-conference by self-reflecting on his/her lesson.

Example: "How do you think the lesson went?"

Reinforcement Plan

1. **Reinforcement objective.** Use specific language from the rubric to develop the objective.

Example: "By the end of the conference, the teacher will be able to explain how she plans for the types and frequency of questions that she asks during a lesson." This objective includes specific language from the *Questioning* indicator.

2. **Self-analysis question.** Prompt teacher to talk about what you want to reinforce. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric. This can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of reinforcement as it relates to the lesson.

Example: "When you plan a lesson, how do you decide on the type and frequency of questions that you will ask?" (Refer to "Explanation of the TAP Teaching Standards" for additional examples of coaching questions).

3. **Identify specific examples from the evidence about what the teacher did relatively well.** It is critical that the observer leading the post-conference provides specific examples for the lesson of when the teacher incorporated descriptors from the indicator being reinforced.

Example: "You asked a variety of questions throughout the lesson to check for student understanding. You asked numerous questions on the knowledge and comprehension level that led students to review previous learning as they identified the elements of a pictograph and defined mean, mode, median, and range. You also asked them to define vocabulary within the lesson's aim, which allowed you to restate the aim, using their response. As you progressed through the lesson, you continually asked students to explain how they arrived at their answers and to explain their classmates' responses. This type of questioning moves students to a deeper understanding of the content being taught as they must justify their thinking. You also asked questions that required students to evaluate the purpose and advantages of using a pictograph."

Refinement Plan

1. **Refinement objective.** Use specific language from the rubric to develop the objective.

Example: "By the end of the conference, the teacher will be able to explain how she plans for the pacing of a lesson that provides sufficient time for each segment and provides for a clear closure." This objective includes specific language from the *Lesson Structure and Pacing* indicator.

2. **Self-analysis.** Ask a specific question to prompt the teacher to talk about what you want him or her to improve. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric. This can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of refinement as it relates to the lesson.

Example: "When developing lessons, how do you decide on the pacing of the lesson so sufficient time is allocated for each segment?" (Refer to "Explanation of the TAP Teaching Standards" for additional examples of coaching questions).

3. **Identify specific examples from the evidence about what to refine.** It is critical that the observer leading the post-conference provides specific examples from the lesson to support the indicator being refined. This is the most important element of the plan because it models a strong example and labels why it is a strong example. This provides support for the teacher as they apply the model to future lessons.

Example: "You began the lesson with an explanation of the lesson's aim and an overview of the lesson. Modeling for students how to analyze a pictograph followed, and then students were to work in groups to read a pictograph and complete questions on a worksheet. You mentioned earlier that you wanted students to be able to work in groups and then report their findings. However, there was not sufficient time for this to occur during the lesson."

4. **Recommendations.** Provide specific examples of what to refine with suggestions that are concrete. Also indicate why the example is strong and how it will improve student learning.

Example: "As you modeled how to analyze a pictograph, students could have worked with their group members to answer your questions prior to you providing the answer. Then they could have reported to the class their findings. This would have still allowed you to model, but would have also allowed students to work together to analyze the pictograph. For students that may not have required this review, they could have worked independently in a group to analyze their own pictograph while the rest of the class participated in your modeling. This would have also allowed you to differentiate the pacing of the lesson to provide for students who progress at different learning rates. This lesson could also have been segmented into two different lessons. Your modeling with class participation could have been one lesson and then the group activity could have been the next day's lesson. This type of segmenting would also have provided sufficient time for more students to master the lesson's objective and for you to provide a clear closure based on the lesson's aim along with your observation question."

5. **Share the performance ratings.**

CONFERENCING SCORING RUBRIC

To provide additional guidance in developing an effective post-conference, observers should refer to the following rubric utilized in scoring a conference plan.

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Reinforcement Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the standard where the teacher is most accomplished Utilizes language from the Instruction standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a standard where the teacher is At Expectations Utilizes some language in the Instruction standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a standard where the teacher is not At Expectations Reinforcement area is ambiguous
Refinement Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the major area of weakness Refinement area is unambiguous, explicit, and utilizes the language in the Instruction standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies an area of weakness Refinement area utilizes the language in the standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address a needed area of improvement Refinement area is ambiguous
Reinforcement Self-Analysis Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open-ended questions that focus on the reinforcement area Questions use language explicitly tied to the Instruction standard to be reinforced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions focus on the reinforcement area Questions use some language from the Instruction standard to be reinforced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are not well focused on the reinforcement area Questions are not well connected to Instruction standards language
Refinement Self-Analysis Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open-ended questions that focus on the refinement area Questions use language explicitly tied to the Instruction standard to be refined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions focus on the refinement area Questions use some language from the Instruction standard to be refined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are not well focused on the refinement area Questions do not provide language from the Instruction standards

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectations (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Reinforcement Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence clearly exhibits the teacher's major strength by explicitly integrating specific examples from the teacher's observed practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies the teacher's strength by providing some examples from the teacher's observed practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies an incorrect area of strength
Refinement Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence clearly exhibits the teacher's major area for improvement by explicitly integrating specific examples from the teacher's observed practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies the teacher's major area for improvement by providing some examples from the teacher's observed practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies an incorrect area of improvement
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are clear, appropriate, aimed at identified area of refinement, logically sequenced, and presented in a concise manner that will result in improved instruction in the identified area of refinement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are clearly connected to identified area of refinement, are appropriate and if carried out will result in improved instruction in refined area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations absent, vague, inappropriate, unrelated to identified refinement or not aimed at improved instruction in area refined

TEACHER OBSERVATION REPORT TEMPLATE

Observer _____

Teacher Observed _____

School Name _____

License Number _____

☐ Announced

☐ Unannounced

Date ____/____/____ Time _____

Observation Number _____

Planning	Observer Score	Self Score
Instructional Plans (IP)		
Student Work (SW)		
Assessment (AS)		
Environment	Observer Score	Self Score
Expectations (ES)		
Managing Student Behavior (MSB)		
Environment (ENV)		
Respectful Culture (RC)		
Instruction	Observer Score	Self Score
Standards and Objectives (SO)		
Motivating Students (MOT)		
Presenting Instructional Content (PIC)		
Lesson Structure and Pacing (LS)		
Activities and Materials (ACT)		
Questioning (QU)		
Academic Feedback (FEED)		
Grouping Students (GRP)		
Teacher Content Knowledge (TCK)		
Teacher Knowledge of Students (TKS)		
Thinking (TH)		
Problem Solving (PS)		

Reinforcement Objective:
Refinement Objective:

Observer Reflection on Observation (Optional):**Teacher Reflection on Observation (Optional):**

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Observer Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher Signature _____ Date _____

EDUCATOR PROFESSIONALISM RATING REPORT

Teacher Name _____

Date ____/____/____

License Number _____

Evaluator Name _____

School Name _____

Performance Standard		Score
Growing and Developing Professionally	1. The educator is prompt, prepared, and participates in professional development opportunities.	
	2. The educator appropriately attempts to implement new strategies.	
	3. The educator develops and works on a personal learning plan based on analyses of school improvement plans and goals, self-assessment, and feedback from observations.	
Reflecting on Teaching	4. The educator makes thoughtful and accurate assessments of his/her effectiveness as evidenced by the self-reflection after each observation.	
	5. The educator takes action to improve his/her performance.	
	6. The educator utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional or support decisions.	
Community Involvement	7. The educator actively supports school activities and events.	
School Responsibilities	8. The educator adheres to school and district policies for personnel.	
	9. The educator works with peers in contributing to a safe and orderly learning environment.	
	10. The educator contributes to the school community by assisting/mentoring others, including collaborative planning, coaching, or mentoring other educators, or supervising clinical experiences for aspiring teachers.	

Evaluator Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher Signature _____ Date _____



APPENDIX

A Teacher Evaluation System That Works

Summary

Teachers are the most important school-related factor for student achievement gains, but evaluation of teacher performance is seldom conducted in any rigorous way. As policymakers call for a better approach to teacher evaluation, the 10-year history of TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement provides an example of an integrated system for teacher evaluation and support. TAP teachers are evaluated every year through multiple classroom observations by trained and certified raters and through their contributions to student achievement growth. Based on data from TAP schools, research shows that:

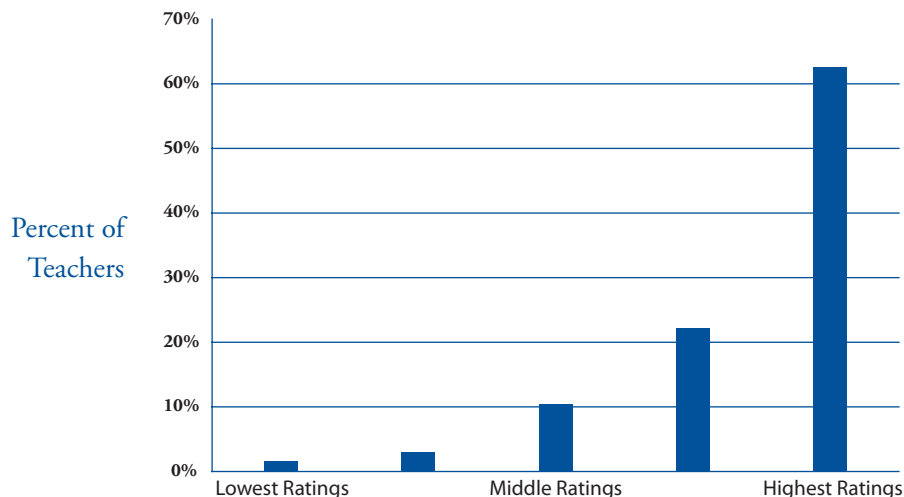
- » TAP teacher evaluations provide differentiated feedback on teacher performance.
- » TAP classroom evaluations are aligned with value-added student achievement outcomes.
- » TAP teachers become more effective over time.
- » TAP schools show higher retention of more effective teachers, and higher turnover of less effective teachers.

Creating the capacity for evaluation and evaluation-guided improvement in schools requires the right tools as well as the sustained engagement of teachers and leaders. The example of TAP implies that teacher evaluation should not be pursued as a one-time, one-size-fits-all policy prescription, but should be integrated within a comprehensive, site-based system with specific practical elements to support teachers and improve teaching and learning in the classroom.

Background

Teachers are the most important school-related factor impacting student achievement gains. However, evaluation of teacher performance is seldom conducted in any rigorous way. As shown in Figure 1, evaluations commonly rate most teachers at the highest level of performance despite the fact that schools are not educating their students at the highest levels.¹

Figure 1. Teacher Evaluations in Urban School Districts



Based on data from Weisberg et al., (2009). Scores on 3-point and 4-point scales have been interpolated to a 5-point scale using a cumulative probability density function based on the reported data.

In this context, the Obama administration has made the evaluation of teacher effectiveness a key piece of education reform. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5) requires states to take actions to improve teacher effectiveness by 2011. In a letter from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to state governors, he specified that states must report the number and percent of teachers and principals rated at each performance level in each local educational agency's evaluation system, and the number and percent of those teacher and principal evaluation systems that require evidence of student achievement outcomes.²

As policymakers call for a better approach to teacher evaluation, the 10-year history of TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement provides an example of an integrated system for teacher evaluation and support to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The TAP system consists of four interrelated elements:

- » Multiple Career Paths
- » Ongoing Applied Professional Growth
- » Instructionally Focused Accountability
- » Performance-Based Compensation

1. Weisberg, D., Sexton, S., Mulhern, J., Keeling, D. (2009). *The widget effect: Our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness*. Brooklyn: The New Teacher Project. Available online at <http://widgeteffect.org/>
 2. Duncan, Arne. (2009). Letter to State Governors regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Accessed online at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/statestabilization/2009-394-cover.pdf>

The accountability component of TAP, i.e., teacher evaluation, is aligned to each of the other elements. TAP evaluations provide feedback to guide professional development and serve as the basis for determining performance-pay awards. TAP relies on trained, expert master and mentor teachers as well as principals to carry out multiple classroom evaluations a year using a research-based rubric, and to provide personalized support for improvement based on these assessments.

Research Findings

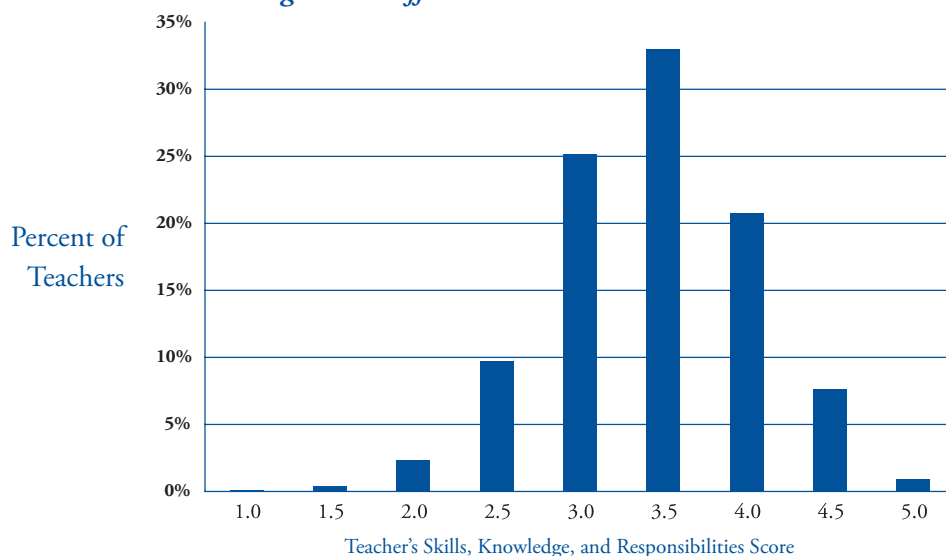
Researchers at the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), which manages TAP, have reported on the TAP evaluation structure and its statistical properties in an NIET Working Paper.³ The study used nationwide TAP evaluation data including value-added scores from the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years,⁴ for a sample of 1,830 teacher-level records. Analysis of classroom evaluation scores and retention outcomes drew from a sample of 7,377 teacher-level records from the 2004-05 to 2008-09 school years.

The findings of the study are as follows:

1. TAP teacher evaluations provide differentiated feedback on teacher performance.

The TAP teacher evaluation structure includes four or more classroom evaluations each year by trained and certified observers using research-based instructional quality rubrics. These evaluations result in a Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities (SKR) score on a **1-5** scale, with **3** representing proficient performance that still has room for improvement. The scores are averaged over the year for a final SKR score for each teacher. The mean SKR score for TAP teachers nationwide is **3.5** out of **5**, significantly different from other evaluation systems nationwide that rate few teachers below the top level of performance. The scores of TAP teachers follow a mound-shaped distribution, as shown in Figure 2, which much more closely matches what we know about how teachers vary in effectiveness than does the inflated distribution shown in Figure 1. The TAP teacher evaluation system offers more useful feedback to teachers and administrators than evaluation structures that uniformly assign high ratings irrespective of a teacher's actual performance.

Figure 2: Differentiated Teacher Evaluations in TAP



n=7,377 teacher-level records from 2004-05 through 2008-09.

The next finding addresses whether these differentiated results are connected with measures of student learning.

3. Daley, G., and Kim, L. (2010). A teacher evaluation system that works. NIET Working Paper. Santa Monica, CA:

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. Available online at http://www.tapsystem.org/publications/wp_eval.pdf

4. Teacher-level value-added data for later years were incomplete at the time of doing the analysis.

2. TAP classroom evaluations are aligned with value-added student achievement outcomes.

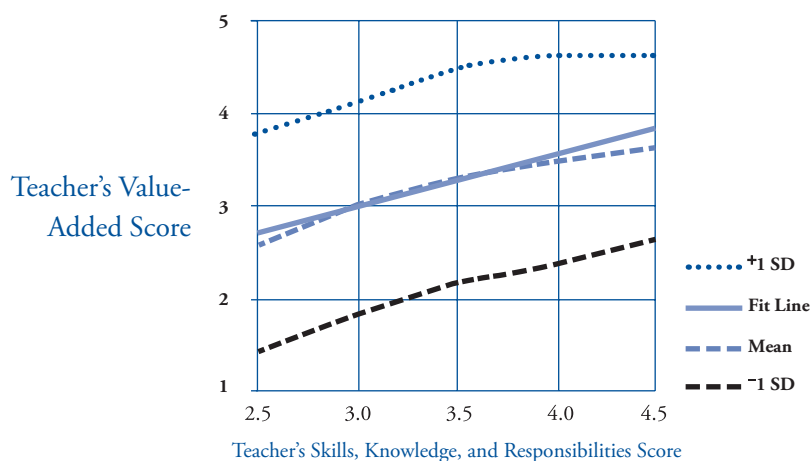
A higher quality of instruction in the classroom would be expected to lead to greater student gains on standardized achievement tests. Our analysis reveals a strong relationship between observed teacher evaluation ratings (SKR) and value-added measures of student learning.

Value-added assessment is a method for measuring the contribution of teachers or schools to the growth in their students' academic achievement during a school year. This method involves matching each student's test scores to his or her own previous scores in order to measure individual growth. Through value-added assessment, the impact of a school year on a student's learning can be separated from the student's prior experiences in and out of school, as well as the student's individual characteristics such as demographics, socioeconomic status, and family conditions.⁵

The TAP value-added component provides each teacher with a classroom score showing the teacher's average student gain during the school year. The majority of value-added calculations used by TAP schools are performed by a single, independent value-added provider. For TAP teacher evaluations, these statistics are converted to a 5-point scale: a **1** represents significantly lower than one year of classroom-average student growth as compared to classrooms of students with similar previous achievement, a **3** represents one year of expected academic growth for similar students, and a **5** represents significantly higher than one year of growth for similar students.

There is a wide distribution of these value-added scores at each point on the SKR scale, as shown by the dashed lines in Figure 3, representing the mean value added and one standard deviation (SD) above and below the mean. This is one reason to combine complementary measures of performance rather than relying entirely on either observations or value-added results to determine teacher effectiveness or performance-based compensation. However, the overall relationship between teachers' value-added scores and their SKR scores is significant and positive, as shown by the slope of the straight line ("fit line") in Figure 3, representing the best statistical estimate of the true relationship, i.e. the model that best fits the data. In other words, higher SKR scores for teachers during the school year are associated with higher value-added scores for their students at the end of the year. This confirms that TAP classroom evaluations are aligned with value-added assessments of teacher performance in terms of student learning.

Figure 3. Relationship between SKR and Value-Added, Simple Regression Model

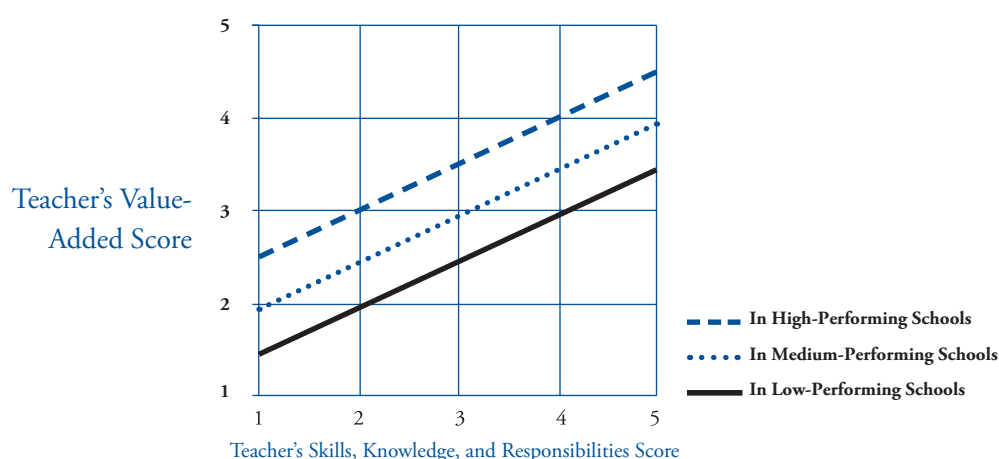


Scores are from TAP schools for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. n = 1780 teachers

5. For more information about value-added assessment, please see <http://www.tapsystem.org/policyresearch/policyresearch.taf?page=valueadded>

This finding of a strong relationship between SKR and value-added measures holds up through a variety of statistical models controlling for school characteristics and schoolwide performance. A hierarchical linear model that includes schoolwide value added (i.e., the average student growth for the whole school as opposed to a teacher's classroom) shows that teachers in high-performing schools are more likely to have higher individual value added than others with the same SKR at low-performing schools (Figure 4). This result is meaningful because schoolwide value added is *not* simply the aggregate of teacher value added. In value-added modeling, teachers are compared with other teachers who have similar students, and schools are compared with other schools attended by similar students. Furthermore, only teachers in tested grades and subjects, with enough students who have previous test score histories in the data set, can receive classroom value-added scores. The schoolwide value-added score is more inclusive. The fact that this analysis yields significant positive results suggests that there is indeed a schoolwide effect separate from the aggregate of teacher effects. This point is consistent with the TAP concept that teachers' overall impact on student learning is raised by site-based collaborative professional growth and accountability under the instructional leadership of master and mentor teachers as well as school principals.

Figure 4. Relationship between SKR and Value-Added, Hierarchical Model Fit Lines



High-Performing Schools: n=682 teachers, with schoolwide value added 4 or 5

Medium-Performing Schools: n=649 teachers, with schoolwide value added 3

Low-Performing Schools: n=449 teachers, with schoolwide value added 1 or 2

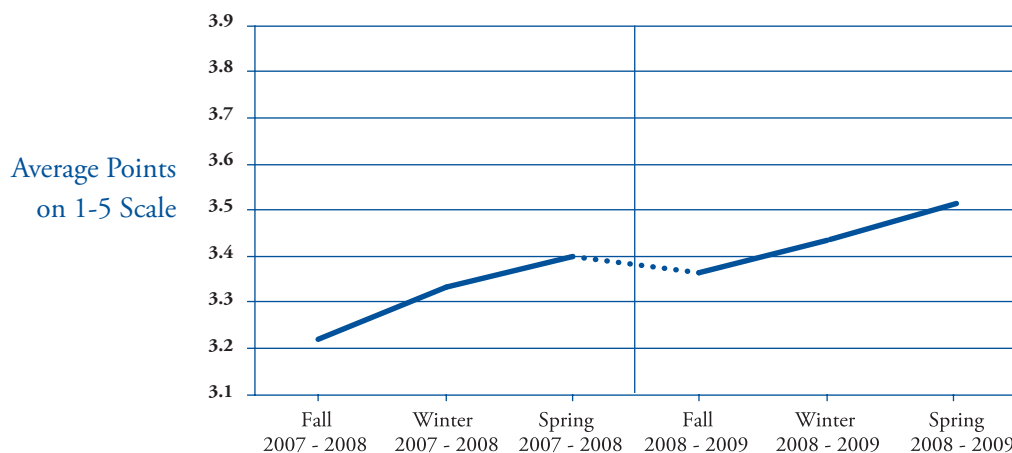
Scores are from 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years.

These results provide an important validation of TAP teacher evaluations. When teachers demonstrate strong instructional skills as measured by classroom observations, their students show higher academic growth regardless of previous achievement and socioeconomic status.

3. TAP teachers become more effective over time.

The study also investigated evidence regarding whether teachers' performance in TAP schools improves over time, both individually as a result of professional growth and across schools as a result of retention of more effective teachers. TAP teachers demonstrate steady improvement in observed skills during the course of the school year. Figure 5 shows the improvement in instructional quality scores over a two-year period. In the data shown, despite a slight dip over the summer while away from school, teachers demonstrated an overall path of improvement that continued over both years.

Figure 5. Improvement in Observed Teacher Skills, 2007-08 and 2008-09



Average of Instructional SKR indicators for 2007-2009 cohort (n = 650 teachers)

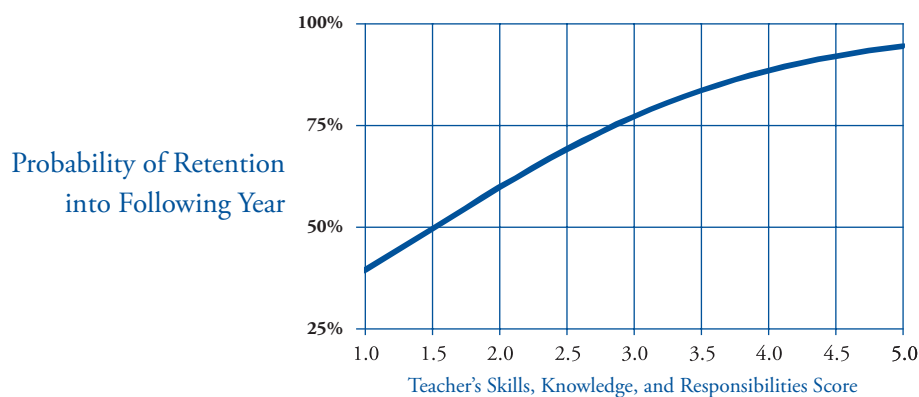
This graph is based on a sample including all TAP schools during the years 2007-09. We tracked a cohort of 650 teachers through observations grouped into six periods in the fall, winter and spring of the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. The cohort was composed of teachers working in TAP schools both years, with observations in each of the observation periods. Teachers present in only one school year or whose observations clustered around the same time frame during a year were excluded from the sample. The graph shows consistent growth during each school year as well as growth from one year to the next.

This result for SKR scores taken at multiple points during a two-year period is confirmed by also looking at annual SKR scores taken over multiple years. For the school years 2005-06 through 2008-09, for teachers with matched records over consecutive years (n=4,882 teacher-level records by year), TAP teachers' SKR scores improved on average by a significant sixth of a point per year on the **1-5** SKR scale. Importantly, teachers with previous-year SKR scores less than **3** demonstrated the most growth, averaging more than a half-point increase per year on the **1-5** SKR scale. TAP helps develop less effective teachers into more effective teachers through ongoing, applied professional growth informed by rigorous evaluations.

4. TAP schools show higher retention of more effective teachers, and higher turnover of less effective teachers.

In addition to the impact of individual teacher growth, the quality of the teaching staff at TAP schools improves over time as a result of differences in the retention and turnover of teachers related to their instructional effectiveness. As illustrated in Figure 6, for each point higher that a teacher's SKR score is in one year, the teacher's odds of remaining in a TAP school the following year increases by 87%. Figure 7 shows the same relationship, inverted to emphasize that teachers with lower classroom evaluation scores are more likely to leave a TAP school.

Figure 6. Relationship between Teacher Evaluation Ratings and Retention

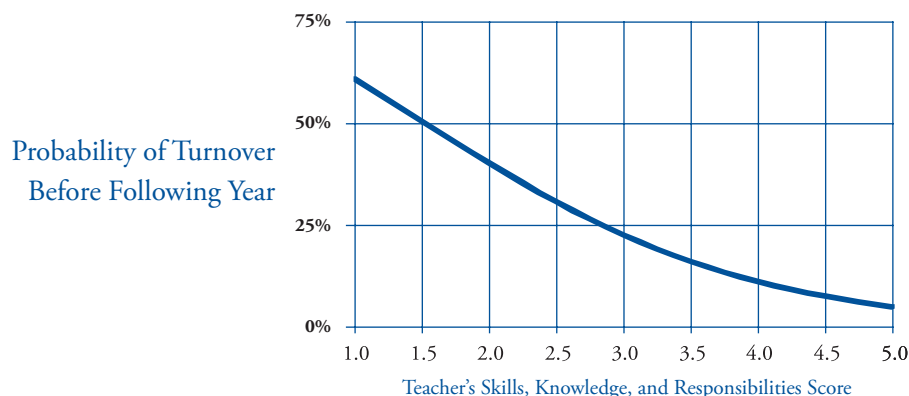


n = 7,377 teacher-level records by year from 2005 through 2009

Retention includes teachers who stayed in TAP schools, including teachers who became TAP master and mentor teachers.

Retention does not include teachers who became administrators, moved to non-TAP schools, or left teaching.

Figure 7. Relationship between Teacher Evaluation Ratings and Turnover



n = 7,377 teacher-level records by year from 2005 through 2009

Turnover includes teachers who became administrators, moved to non-TAP schools or left teaching. Turnover does

not include teachers who stayed in TAP schools, including teachers who became TAP master and mentor teachers.

This difference in teacher retention as it relates to quality is consistent with the theory that the TAP system motivates good teachers to stay, while giving less effective teachers *both* an opportunity to improve *and* an incentive not to stay where they are less likely to receive high ratings and bonuses. Since observational ratings are correlated with student value added, this will result in a more effective teaching staff and greater student growth over time.

Implications of the Findings for Policy and Practice

As educators and policymakers work to improve the quality of education in American schools, a central focus of their efforts is the evaluation of teachers. Although teacher evaluation by itself is sometimes criticized as arbitrary, one-dimensional, undifferentiated, disconnected from the needs of students, and unaligned with professional development opportunities for improvement, this study shows that a well-designed, integrated system can be objective, rigorous, differentiated, multidimensional, linked to student learning and supportive of teacher improvement.

Underlying these abstractions are many concrete details of design and implementation, as described in the NIET Working Paper from this study. Creating the capacity for teacher evaluation and evaluation-guided instructional improvement in schools requires the right tools as well as the sustained engagement of teachers and leaders. The example of TAP implies that teacher evaluation should not be pursued as a one-time, one-size-fits-all policy prescription, but should be integrated within a comprehensive, site-based system with specific practical elements to support teachers and improve teaching and learning in the classroom.

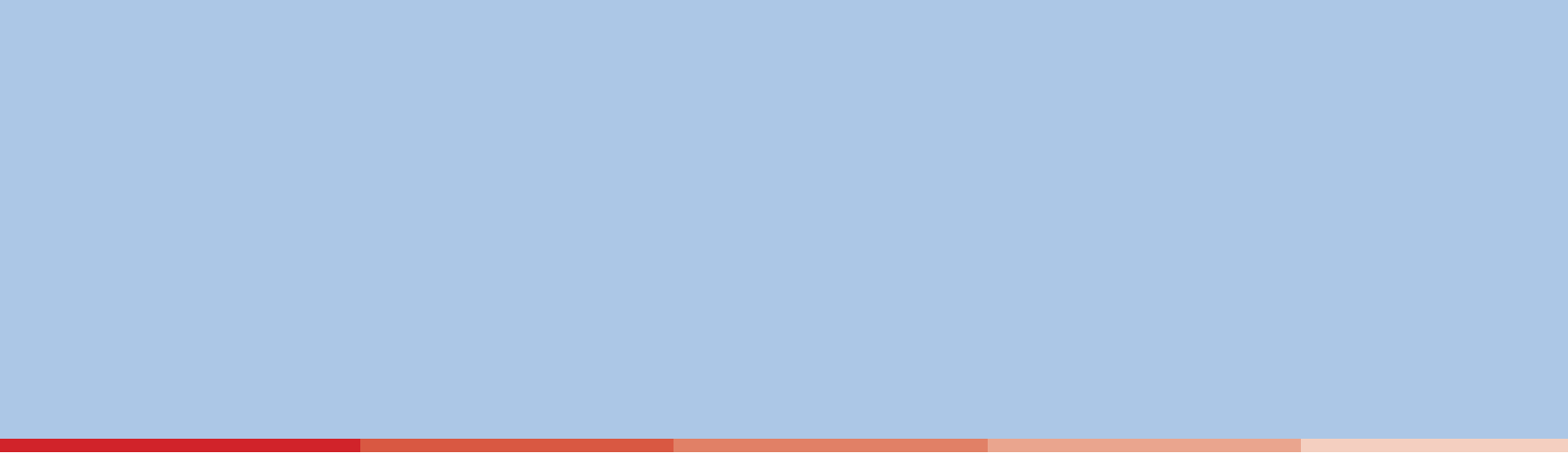
For the NIET Working Paper on this study, please see:

http://www.tapsystem.org/publications/wp_eval.pdf

For additional information on TAP, please visit:

<http://www.tapsystem.org>

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) was established in 2005 as an independent 501(c)(3) public charity. With a staff experienced in teaching, school leadership, program evaluation, research, and business management, NIET operates TAP and works to ensure the system's effectiveness and sustainability. NIET researchers study the design, operations, and impact of TAP in the context of other research literature and public policy perspectives.



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