NIET | NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Teaching and Learning Standards Handbook

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NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric

The *NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric* is designed to support improvements in classroom instruction. By clearly defining effective teaching and student-centered instruction, it provides teachers with a roadmap for strengthening their practice, facilitates high-quality coaching, and fosters collaboration around best instructional practices. The rubric is based on 20 years of research and experience across 21 states, and it has been used by educators in environments ranging from urban to rural and in classrooms of all subjects and modalities. It provides educators with a common understanding and language for designing and planning instruction, using effective instructional practices to support student learning, and creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment. The vision represented within the rubric maximizes instructional excellence and correlates with student achievement and growth. The *NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric* has always been student centered, and in the highest level of performance, there should be evidence that students are taking ownership over their learning with the teacher's facilitation. In the 2021 updates, this focus on students and ensuring their equitable access to high-quality instruction has been clarified and strengthened.

The NIET's *Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric* brings a comprehensive focus on three key domains: **instruction, designing and planning instruction,** and **the learning environment.** NIET also has a **professionalism** domain for teacher leaders, available separately.

Instruction	Designing and Planning Instruction	The Learning Environment
1. Standards and Objectives 2. Motivating Students 3. Presenting Instructional Content 4. Lesson Structure and Pacing 5. Activities and Materials 6. Questioning 7. Academic Feedback 8. Grouping Students 9. Teacher Content Knowledge 10. Teacher Knowledge of Students 11. Thinking 12. Problem-Solving	1. Instructional Plans 2. Student Work 3. Assessment	1. Expectations 2. Engaging Students and Managing Behavior 3. Environment 4. Respectful Culture

Performance definitions are provided at levels 5, 3, and 1. Observers can score performance at levels 2 or 4 based on evidence and their professional judgment. A rating of 2 often occurs when examination of the evidence is stronger than unsatisfactory but there is not specific evidence to merit a proficient rating. A rating of 4 often occurs when many of the descriptors in the proficient level are evident and strong but there is not enough evidence or consistency to merit an exemplary rating of 5. These ratings should always be based on close evaluation of evidence, including student work and observation analysis.

INSTRUCTION			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Standards and Objectives (SO)	• All learning objectives and state content standards, and their connection to student work expectations, are explicitly communicated and understood by students. • Objectives and expectations are aligned to the depth and rigor of the standards; lesson content is aligned to the standards and objectives. • Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective. • Students make connections between learning objectives and (a) what they have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) knowledge of other disciplines. • Expectations for each student's performance are clear, demanding, and high, and student work is aligned to state content standards and learning objectives. • Students are able to articulate expectations and explain those to their peers. • State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson with explanations. • Student work shows evidence that each student is progressing or demonstrating mastery of the objective(s).	• Learning objectives and state content standards are communicated. • Objectives and expectations are aligned to the depth and rigor of the standards; lesson content is aligned to the standards and objectives. • Sub-objectives are 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 students are progressing or demonstrating mastery of the objective(s).	• Some 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 little evidence that students are progressing or demonstrating mastery of the objective(s).
Motivating Students (MOT)	• The teacher consistently organizes the content, including curriculum resources, so that it is personally meaningful, relevant, and intellectually engaging to students. • The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • Students are consistently engaged in their own learning, and the teacher reinforces students' initiative to learn more.	• The teacher organizes the content, including curriculum resources, so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. • The teacher develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort.	• The teacher sometimes organizes the content, including curriculum resources, so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. • The teacher seldom develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • The teacher rarely reinforces and rewards effort.

INSTRUCTION			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Presenting Instructional Content (PIC)	Presentation of content always includes: • visuals, including student work exemplars, 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 or student that demonstrates accurate understanding of the content and meets performance expectations; • criteria that clarifies how students can be successful; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information; and • no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.	Presentation of content consistently includes: • 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; • criteria that clarifies how students can be successful; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information; and • no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.	Presentation of content inconsistently includes: • 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; • criteria that clarifies how students can be successful; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information; and • no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.
Lesson Structure and Pacing (LS)	• The lesson starts promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, based on the content, and organized to meet students' needs, with time for reflection to ensure student understanding. • Pacing is brisk, adjusted for rigor of content and individual student learning expectations. • Students' individual needs are attended to and pacing provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates. • Students understand and engage in classroom routines and transitions to ensure efficient use of time.	• The lesson starts promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, based on the content, and has a beginning, middle, and end, with time for reflection to ensure student understanding. • 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.	• The lesson does not start promptly. • The lesson has a structure, but may be missing key components of the content, or it may not include reflection or introductory elements. • Pacing rarely provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates. • Routines for distributing materials are inefficient. • Considerable time is lost during transitions.

INSTRUCTION			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*

Activities and Materials (ACT)	Activities and materials include all of the following:
	• *Content:*
	  ○ support the lesson objectives;
	  ○ are challenging;
	  ○ elicit a variety of thinking;
	  ○ provide time for reflection;
	  ○ are relevant to students' lives;
	• *Student-centered:*
	  ○ sustain students' attention;
	  ○ provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction;
	  ○ evoke student curiosity and suspense;
	  ○ provide students with choices;
	• *Multiple materials:*
	  ○ incorporate multimedia and technology; and
	  ○ incorporate additional standards-based resources where appropriate to support individual and whole group understanding (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.).
	• In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction, and students are continuously self-monitoring.
		Activities and materials include a majority of the following:
		• *Content:*
		  ○ support the lesson objectives;
		  ○ are challenging;
		  ○ elicit a variety of thinking;
		  ○ provide time for reflection;
		  ○ are relevant to students' lives;
		• *Student-centered:*
		  ○ sustain students' attention;
		  ○ provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction;
		  ○ evoke student curiosity and suspense;
		  ○ provide students with choices;
		• *Multiple materials:*
		  ○ incorporate multimedia and technology; and
		  ○ incorporate additional standards-based resources where appropriate (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.).
			Activities and materials include few of the following:
			• *Content*:
			  ○ support the lesson objectives;
			  ○ are challenging;
			  ○ elicit a variety of thinking;
			  ○ provide time for reflection;
			  ○ are relevant to students' lives;
			• *Student-centered:*
			  ○ sustain students' attention;
			  ○ provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction;
			  ○ evoke student curiosity and suspense;
			  ○ provide students with choices;
			• *Multiple materials:*
			  ○ incorporate multimedia and technology; and
			  ○ incorporate additional standards-based resources where appropriate (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.).

INSTRUCTION			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Questioning (QU)	• Teacher questions are varied and high-quality, providing an appropriate mix of question types based on content: ○ knowledge and comprehension; ○ application and analysis; and ○ creation and evaluation. • Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent. • The frequency of questions consistently engages students in the rigor of the content and in critical thinking. • Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided. • Students regularly respond to a variety of teacher questions (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers). • All students are actively answering questions and engaging with the teacher or each other to share their perspectives. • Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.	• Teacher questions are varied and high-quality, providing an appropriate mix of question types based on content: ○ knowledge and comprehension; ○ application and analysis; and ○ creation and evaluation. • Questions are purposeful and coherent. • The frequency of questions engages students in critical thinking. • Questions are sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Wait time (3-5 seconds) is provided. • Questions require active responses (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • The teacher calls on a variety of students to engage different students' perspectives and provide opportunities for many students to respond.	• Teacher questions are inconsistent in quality and include few question types: ○ knowledge and comprehension; ○ application and analysis; and ○ creation and evaluation. • Questions are random and lack coherence. • The frequency of questions sometimes engages students in critical thinking. • Questions are rarely sequenced with attention to the instructional goals. • Wait time (3-5 seconds) is inconsistently provided. • Questions rarely require active responses (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers). • The teacher mostly calls on volunteers.
Academic Feedback (FEED)	• Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality. • Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and review of independent work assignments. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress based on student work expectations, and provide individual feedback. • Feedback, both verbal and non-verbal, from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction. • Students give specific and clear feedback to each other based on the teacher's expectations.	• Oral and written feedback is academically focused, frequent, and high quality. • Feedback is given during guided practice and review of independent work assignments. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities to support engagement and monitor student work. • Feedback from students is used to monitor and adjust instruction.	• The quality and timeliness of feedback is inconsistent. • Feedback is sometimes given during guided practice and review of independent work assignments. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities, but monitors mostly behavior. • Feedback from students is sometimes used to monitor or adjust instruction.

INSTRUCTION			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Grouping Students (GRP)	• The instructional grouping arrangements (whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency. • Teacher sets clear expectations that are understood by students. • In an instructional group, each student takes responsibility for their individual role, tasks, and group work expectations so they can have meaningful and productive collaboration. • In an instructional group, each student assumes accountability for completing 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. • Students set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning in instructional groups. • When provided the choice or independence, students make responsible decisions about how to group themselves.	• The instructional grouping arrangements (whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) adequately enhance student understanding and learning efficiency. • Teacher sets expectations that are understood by students. • In an instructional group, students take responsibility for their roles, tasks, and group work expectations so they can have meaningful and productive collaboration. • 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 accomplish the goals of the lesson. • Instructional groups facilitate opportunities for students to set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning.	• The instructional grouping arrangements (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 (TCK) *[See companion tool.]*	• Teacher displays extensive content knowledge and understanding of both state standards and instructional materials, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach. • Teacher consistently implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • Teacher consistently highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas.	• Teacher displays accurate content knowledge and understanding both of state standards and instructional materials, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach. • Teacher implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • Teacher highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas.	• Teacher displays under-developed content knowledge and lacks understanding of state standards or instructional materials, including their curriculum, 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 (TKS)	• Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning abilities and challenges. • Teacher practices consistently incorporate student interests, backgrounds, and cultures. • Teacher consistently provides differentiated instructional content and strategies to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.	• Teacher practices display understanding of students' anticipated learning abilities and challenges. • Teacher practices incorporate student interests, backgrounds, and cultures. • Teacher provides differentiated instructional content and strategies to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.	• Teacher practices demonstrate some knowledge of students' anticipated learning abilities and challenges. • Teacher practices sometimes incorporate student interests, backgrounds, or cultures. • Teacher practices demonstrate some differentiation of instructional methods or content.

INSTRUCTION			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Thinking (TH)	• Students are actively engaged in multiple types of thinking: ○ 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. • The teacher and/or students model metacognitive strategies. • Students are provided opportunities to: ○ generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; ○ analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints; and ○ monitor their thinking to ensure they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies they are using and why.	• The teacher engages students in multiple types of thinking: ○ 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. • The teacher and students: ○ generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; and ○ analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.	• The teacher implements some learning experiences that engage students in different types of thinking. • The teacher sometimes provides opportunities where students: ○ generate a variety of ideas and alternatives; or ○ analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.
Problem-Solving (PS)	• Students engage in activities that reinforce several of the following problem-solving types: ○ Abstraction ○ Categorization ○ Drawing conclusions/justifying solutions ○ Predicting outcomes ○ Observing and experimenting ○ Improving solutions ○ Identifying relevant/irrelevant information ○ Generating ideas ○ Creating and designing	• The teacher uses and/or engages students in some the following problem-solving types: ○ Abstraction ○ Categorization ○ Drawing conclusions/justifying solutions ○ Predicting outcomes ○ Observing and experimenting ○ Improving solutions ○ Identifying relevant/irrelevant information ○ Generating ideas ○ Creating and designing	• The teacher sometimes engages students in the following problem-solving types: ○ Abstraction ○ Categorization ○ Drawing conclusions/justifying solutions ○ Predicting outcomes ○ Observing and experimenting ○ Improving solutions ○ Identifying relevant/irrelevant information ○ Generating ideas ○ Creating and designing

PLANNING			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Instructional Plans (IP)	Instructional plans include: • measurable and explicit objectives aligned to state standards and aligned curriculum, both in content and in rigor; • activities, materials, and assessments that: ○ are aligned to state standards; content, including curriculum; and success criteria; ○ are sequenced and scaffolded based on student need; ○ build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines as appropriate; and ○ provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson closure; • evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners; • evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs and student choice; and • strategies for student autonomy and ownership.	Instructional plans include: • objectives aligned to state standards and aligned curriculum, both in content and in rigor; • activities, materials, and assessments that: ○ are aligned to state standards; content, including curriculum; and success criteria; ○ are sequenced and scaffolded based on student need; ○ build on prior student knowledge; and ○ provide appropriate time for student work and lesson closure; • evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of learners; and • evidence that the plan provides opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.	Instructional plans include: • some objectives aligned to state standards and aligned curriculum; • activities, materials, and assessments that: ○ are sometimes aligned to state standards; ○ are sometimes logically sequenced; ○ sometimes build on prior student knowledge; and ○ inconsistently provide time for student work and lesson closure; • little evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, or interests of the learners; and • little evidence that the plan provides opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.
Student Work (SW)	Assignments are: • always aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards and curriculum content. • always aligned to the lesson's objective and include descriptions of how assessment results will inform future instruction. Students: • 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.	Assignments are: • aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards and curriculum content. • aligned to the lesson's objective and include descriptions of how assessment results will inform future instruction. Assignments require students to: • interpret information rather than reproduce it; • draw conclusions and support them through writing; and • connect what they are learning to prior learning and life experiences.	Assignments require students to: • mostly reproduce information; • sometimes draw conclusions and support them through writing; and • sometimes connect what they are learning to prior learning or life experiences.

PLANNING			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) Exemplary	**At Expectations (3) Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher Facilitates the Learning*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of Learning – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Assessment (AS)	Assessments: • are aligned with the depth and rigor of the state standards and content, including curriculum resources; • are designed to provide feedback on progress against objectives; • use a variety of question types and formats to gauge student learning and problem-solving; • measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice); • require extended written tasks as appropriate; • include clear illustrations of student progress toward state standards, which students monitor, understand, and articulate; and • include descriptions of how assessment results will be used by teachers and students to inform future instruction and learning.	Assessments: • are aligned with the depth and rigor of the state standards and content, including curriculum resources; • are designed to provide feedback on progress against objectives; • use a variety of question types and formats to gauge student learning and problem-solving; • measure student performance in more than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice); • require written responses as appropriate; and • include performance checks and student reflection on performance throughout the school year.	Assessments: • are sometimes aligned with state standards and content, including curriculum resources; • are not designed well to provide feedback on progress against objectives; • uses few question types to gauge student learning; • measure student performance in less than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice); and • include performance checks, although the purpose of these checks is not clear.

ENVIRONMENT			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) **Exemplary**	**At Expectations (3)** **Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1)** **Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of the Learning Environment – Teacher and Students Establish the Environment*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of the Learning Environment – Teacher Establishes the Environment*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of the Learning Environment – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Expectations (ES)	• Teacher engages students in learning with clear and rigorous academic expectations and actively uses aligned and differentiated materials and resources to ensure equitable access to learning. • Students regularly learn from their mistakes and can describe their thinking on what they learned. • Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students consistently experience success. • Students lead opportunities that support learning. • Students take initiative to meet or exceed teacher expectations. • Teacher optimizes instructional time to ensure each student meets their learning goals.	• Teacher engages students in learning with clear and rigorous academic expectations with aligned materials and resources for students to access. • Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes. • Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success. • Students complete their work according to teacher expectations.	• Teacher expectations are not rigorous for students. • Teacher does not create learning opportunities where students can experience success. • Student work is rarely completed to meet teacher expectations.
Engaging Students and Managing Behavior (ESMB)	• Students are consistently engaged in behaviors that optimize learning and increase time on task. • Teacher and students establish collective commitments for learning and behavior. • Teacher consistently uses and students reinforce several techniques (e.g., rewards, approval, contingent activities, consequences, etc.) that maintain student engagement and promote a positive classroom environment. • Teacher consistently recognizes and motivates positive behaviors and does not allow inconsequential behavior to interrupt the lesson. • Teacher addresses individual students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class. • Teacher quickly attends to disruptions with minimal interruption to learning.	• Students are mostly engaged in behaviors that optimize learning and increase time on task. • Teacher establishes rules for learning and behavior. • Teacher uses a variety of techniques (e.g., rewards, approval, contingent activities, consequences, etc.) that maintain student engagement and promote a positive classroom environment. • Teacher often recognizes and motivates positive behaviors and does not allow inconsequential behavior to interrupt the lesson. • Teacher addresses students who have caused disruptions, yet sometimes he or she addresses the entire class.	• Students are consistently engaged in behavior that interrupts learning or minimizes time on task. • Teacher establishes few rules for learning and behavior. • Teacher uses few techniques to maintain student engagement. • Teacher does not or inconsistently addresses behavior that interrupts learning. • Teacher over-addresses inconsequential behavior.

ENVIRONMENT			
	Significantly Above Expectations (5) **Exemplary**	**At Expectations (3)** **Proficient**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1)** **Unsatisfactory**
Description of performance level	*Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of the Learning Environment – Teacher and Students Establish the Environment*	*Some Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/ Student Ownership of the Learning Environment – Teacher Establishes the Environment*	*Minimal Evidence of Student Ownership of the Learning Environment – Heavy Emphasis on Teacher Direction*
Environment (ENV)	The classroom: • welcomes all students and guests and provides a safe space for all students to take risks and interact with peers. • is clearly organized and designed for and with students to promote learning for all. • has supplies, equipment, and resources easily and readily accessible to provide equitable opportunities for all students. • displays current student work that promotes a positive and inclusive classroom environment. • is arranged to maximize individual and group learning and to reinforce a positive classroom culture.	The classroom: • welcomes all students and guests. • is organized to promote learning for all students. • has supplies, equipment, and resources accessible to provide equitable opportunities for students. • displays current student work. • is arranged to promote individual and group learning.	The classroom: • is somewhat uninviting. • is not organized to promote student learning. • supplies, equipment, and resources are difficult to access. • does not display student work. • is not arranged to promote group learning.
Respectful Culture (RC)	• Teacher-student and student-student interactions consistently demonstrate caring, kindness, and respect for one another and celebrate and acknowledge all students' background and culture. • Teacher seeks out and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students. • Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom.	• Teacher-student interactions are generally positive and reflect awareness and consideration of all students' background and culture. • Teacher and students exhibit respect and kindness for the teacher and each other; classroom is free of unhealthy conflict, sarcasm, and put-downs. • Teacher is receptive to the interests and opinions of students.	• Teacher does not establish a safe and positive classroom culture for students. • Students do not exhibit respect for the teacher or each other. • Teacher and/or student interaction and communication is characterized by unhealthy conflict, sarcasm, or put-downs. • Teacher is not receptive to interests and opinions of students.

Indicator Explanations and Examples

The following pages contain more detailed description and context for each rubric indicator (e.g., Standards and Objectives, Grouping Students). The expanded explanation is provided to support educator understanding of what each indicator "looks and sounds like" in the classroom. For each indicator, the document provides:

- ***Indicator Overview*:** The overview provides a brief description of the indicator and its importance to effective teaching and learning. The overview is an entry point for understanding the indicator.
- ***Content and Curriculum Connections*:** The curriculum connections section provides examples of how the indicator can be connected to content and curriculum, acknowledging the importance of connecting *what we teach* to *how we teach*.
- ***Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning***: This section provides sample student evidence of student-centered learning, which reflects level 5 (exemplary) instruction. At level 5, students take ownership of their learning – meaning, students share and explain what they are learning, apply and extend strategies to other contexts and ideas, and take responsibility for their progress and success. While these examples are not comprehensive, they provide the types of evidence teachers and leaders can look for.
- ***Key Terms*:** The rubric indicators and descriptors provide a common language for describing effective teaching and learning. The key terms list identifies words used in the rubric and handbook for which a common understanding is essential. Attention to these words by the teacher and evaluator will strengthen comprehension of the rubric indicator.
- ***Descriptors - Meaning and Actions*:** The greater part of each indicator section is captured in a chart that speaks to each of the indicator's Level 5 descriptors and, for each descriptor, provides an explanation of the descriptor and possible evidence of that description. Educators will notice that the various descriptors for rubric indicators are connected within and across domains. These connections are often explicitly acknowledged, but educators should also look for and make other connections on their own.
- ***Suggested Reflection Questions*:** The reflection questions serve a dual purpose. The classroom teacher can use these questions to reflect on his/her own instruction. The teacher leader or school leader can use these questions to guide coaching conversations and/or post-observation conferences. The questions can be used by teachers and observers to consider their progress and next steps for going deeper.

Educators are encouraged to use this *NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Handbook* as a resource to pursue the goal of teacher excellence and student achievement.

INSTRUCTION DOMAIN

Standards and Objectives

Indicator Overview

In many ways, this indicator is the foundation for all other indicators. If the teacher is not clear about the rigor of the standard and what she wants students to know and be able to do as a result of the aligned lesson, then the sequence of instruction cannot be appropriately developed or implemented. Both the students and the teacher should understand what is to be accomplished during each lesson.

Planning effective lessons aligned to the state content standards is dependent upon the teacher's ability to create and communicate rigorous and clearly defined learning objectives. This planning of standards-aligned lessons begins with the teacher's understanding of the standard and the expectations for mastery of the standard.

Content and Curriculum Connections

All lessons should begin with the clear identification of a learning objective aligned to state content standards and the adopted curriculum, when available. Standards and objectives should align with high-quality curricula (and the accompanying lessons, when available), as these materials are aligned to state content standards and have a clear scope and sequence.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students turn the objective into an essential question and return to answer the question during the lesson.
- Students set personal learning goals based on the lesson objective and reflect on progress toward those goals at the end of the lesson.
- Students make connections, individually or in groups, to previous lessons and personal experiences.
- Students deconstruct the objective to determine the criteria for mastery of the objective.
- Students return to the objective of the lesson to analyze their understanding.
- Students assess their work and understanding of the criteria of mastery for the objective.
- Students articulate and explain the lesson to their peers.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Communicated	Learning objectives and standards are considered communicated when the objective and standard are written so that students can understand and are understood by all students. Students should be able to articulate what they are learning.

Connected	The learning objectives should be a component on a continuum of learning aligned to the standards and accompanying curriculum resources.
Expectations	Expectations are the intentional use of learning targets and the pathway to mastery.
Mastery	Mastery is the demonstration by students that they are internalizing and meeting the lesson objective.
Student Work	All activities, assignments, and products that students work through and complete should align with the lesson objectives. Student work demonstrates each student's progress toward mastery.
Sub-objectives	Sub-objectives are skills that students need to learn or be able to demonstrate in order to meet the learning target.
Referenced	Learning objectives and standards are referenced when the teacher makes connections between the learning objective and the lesson activities.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
All learning objectives and state content standards, and their connections to student work expectations, are explicitly communicated and understood by students.	Before a learning objective can be clearly communicated, it must be clearly written. Clearly written objectives have three components: 1. Observable verbs and actions 2. A clear description of learning outcome 3. Measurable criteria Observable verbs are arranged in order of complexity in thinking. The teacher must be confident that students know and understand the learning objective and connect to student work expectations through explicit communication. To provide direction and focus, the teacher and students reference and discuss learning objectives and student work expectations at critical points throughout a lesson. At the end of the lesson, the students reflect on how they met the learning objective. The teacher should explicitly teach students the vocabulary used in the learning objectives and student work expectations. This is important as many state standards reflect the language of state standardized assessments. Teachers may also use visual representations, such as pictures or symbols, to support understanding the meaning of a standard for students.	During her preparation for the lesson, the teacher identified the day's learning objective based on the standard she was teaching. The standard reads **3.RI.1 – Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers.** The teacher wrote a learning objective that aligns with the standard. **Learning objective: I can answer text-dependent questions and justify my answers by providing text evidence.** The teacher posted the learning objective on a white board that all students can see. She referenced the learning objective at the beginning of the lesson and provided students two options for personal goals related to the learning objective: a proficient goal which meets the lesson objective, and an exemplary goal which extends learning beyond the objective. Students chose and recorded a daily personal goal for learning, which they returned to at the end of the lesson to reflect on their progress. The teacher referenced the learning objective at several critical points during the lesson. For example, after students completed a close read of the lesson text, she referenced the learning objective and its connection to the next activity, Fan and Pick, a game that students engaged in with a small group. The Fan and Pick game included a series of text-dependent questions that students worked on together.
Objectives and expectations are aligned to the depth and rigor of the	Planning and implementing objectives and expectations at the standard's depth and rigor is essential to ensure equity of access to content standards. Regardless of a student's achievement	The lesson learning objective, "I can answer text-dependent questions and justify my answers by providing text evidence," aligned to the level of the rigor of the standard 3.RI.1: "Ask and

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
standards; lesson content is aligned to the standards and objectives.	level, all students must be provided with equitable academic access through rigorous and aligned content instruction. This descriptor refers not only to setting clear expectations for what students are to do to support their learning but also set clear expectations for procedures and student behavior during the lesson. For expectations to be clear, present students with a model that demonstrates what they are expected to do as it aligns with the standard's rigor.	answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers." The lesson activities build the students' experience with text-dependent questions throughout the lesson to provide a scaffold for all students achieving mastery of the objective at the highest level of rigor, requiring students to ask and answer questions and justify their answers by explicitly citing text evidence.
Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective.	Learning objectives aligned to state standards are often comprehensive and require prerequisite skills to master student work expectations. Teachers should implement instructional scaffolds through planning sub-objectives to ensure all students have a pathway to mastery of the learning objectives and student work expectations. The selection of appropriate sub-objectives depends on the students' needs, the complexity of the objective, and the content. There are three primary 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 learning objective	A teacher said: "Today, we will create a graph, using the pie, bar, or line format, to illustrate how classmates responded to a questionnaire about sports. I have created a rubric to assist you in completing this assignment." The needs of the students determined what sub-objectives to address. For this example, several sub-objectives were included as a part of this lesson so that all students could be successful. Students must be able to: ● Analyze the data set of the questionnaire about sports ● Interpret the findings in the data ● Determine the best graph (pie, bar, or line) to synthesize the data ● Create the graph
Students make connections between learning objective(s) and (a) what they have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) knowledge of other disciplines.	This descriptor is about making connections in learning. Teachers need to connect new learning to prior learning so students can see learning as a continuum and make real-life connections about how this learning impacts their lives. Most curriculum resources provide teachers with guides that allow student learning to build upon previous learning. This is also supported by brain-science that indicates mastery of learning comes through repeated practice. Connections can be made in a variety of ways. This descriptor is closely related to the descriptors under Teacher Knowledge of Students, which refer to the relevancy to students' lives and incorporating their interests and cultural heritage. A teacher may model his thought process as he connects to a	During an English Language Arts lesson aligned to the standard 3.RI.1 – "Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers" – the teacher used an interesting grade-level article from the district-approved resources Time for Kids: *A Sea of Plastic* that connects the standard with the cross-content connection of environmental impact on ecosystems. The students were highly interested in the topic as the teacher makes explicit connections to how their community action impacts animals in the sea. The students related to pollution issues by looking at trash in and around their school and visualized the impact pollution in multiple communities has on other environments.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	specific topic and then lead students to do this through questioning. It may also be accomplished through group projects based on real-life scenarios. Teachers should plan to lead students to make connections between how what they learn in one content area connects to another content area.	The text selection provided students with a high-interest topic to ask and answer text-dependent questions.
Expectations for each student's performance are clear, demanding, and high, and student work is aligned to state content standards and learning objectives.	This descriptor addresses creating learning objectives and demanding and high-quality expectations for all students. Whether the teacher has succeeded in doing so can only be determined by the student's response to the lesson. It is essential to look at assessment and other diagnostic methods for determining what to teach. For expectations and measurement criteria to be clear for all students, the teacher may need to develop different activities and assessments for different students' levels within the class. The learning objective must challenge all students. This descriptor refers not only to setting clear expectations for what students are to do to support their learning but also set clear expectations for procedures and student behavior during the lesson. For expectations to be clear, present students with a model that demonstrates what they are expected to do. Models may include the use of visuals, teacher or student demonstration, anchor papers, rubrics to demonstrate how student work will be assessed, written steps the students are to follow when completing the assigned activities, and expectations for student work. If students are working in groups, expectations for each group member and the expectation for the group as a whole should be clearly explained.	The teacher shared that the lesson's learning objective is to write a paragraph citing evidence from the text that explains how the main character of the story was feeling during the story. The teacher presented clear measurement criteria so that students could monitor their progress toward mastery: 1. Write a paragraph that explains how the main character feels when moving to a new school. 2. Provide two text citations to support your claim. 3. Use accurate conventions to complete your paragraph. To ensure that students understand the learning objective and had access to a clear student work exemplar, the teacher modeled writing a paragraph using another character in the book. The teacher also provided an anchor chart to provide specific expectations.
Students are able to articulate expectations and explain those to their peers.	This descriptor emphasizes the need for students to be able to articulate the lesson learning expectations to their peers. Once a teacher has created rigorous learning experiences and communicated clear expectations for student work, the next step to exemplary instruction is to ensure all students can accurately internalize and articulate the lesson expectations to their peers. Students need to clearly understand how they will be held	At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asked the students to read the lesson objective and create an essential question that would be answered as a result of the lesson objective. **I can answer text-dependent questions and justify my answers by providing text evidence**,

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	accountable for individual work and group work. Procedures for obtaining materials for the group work, the expected noise level, where students may work, and learning expectations should be clearly explained.	After students worked on their essential question aligned to the lesson objective, the teacher asked the students to turn to their shoulder partner to share and compare their essential questions. The teacher continued by directing the students to explain what they thought the lesson expectations would be to ensure mastery of the lesson.
State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson with explanations.	Displaying the state standards in the classroom supports the connection between student activities and learning goals. However, the benefit of posting a standard is limited if all students cannot see the standard, if the standard is not referenced, or if the language used in the standard is not understood. By referencing the state standards, students can relate the lesson to the "big picture" and prior learning. To make the standards accessible to students, the teacher needs to reference the standards in language that students understand throughout the lesson to provide direction and focus. Many state standards reflect the language of the state test. Therefore, it is essential to post the standards to allow students to learn the content vocabulary they will need to know to be successful. In some cases, teachers may use pictures or symbols to expand meaning for them. The use of pictures or symbols is key to support visual learners and English learners.	The teacher posted the standards in large enough print so that all students can read them from their seats. The teacher also posted the standards using some visual formatting (a map) and students referenced this visual throughout the lesson as they made connections to previous lessons and units of study. This supported students in making connections among the standards and other content areas. For example, the teacher created a web for standards connected to what the students will be learning about World War II. The center of the web referenced World War II. The spokes or lines extending from the center referenced the sub-standards or objectives that will be part of the unit, such as significant individuals they will be studying, essential battles, and other components. The teacher posted examples of exemplary student work and scoring rubrics to demonstrate how students were going to be assessed for meeting the standard(s). These exemplary work samples included work from former students and teacher-created examples.
Student work shows evidence that each student is progressing or demonstrating mastery of the objective(s).	Effective teachers focus on evidence of student learning aligned with lesson expectations at multiple levels and plan for students to engage in student work that serves as formative assessment throughout a lesson. Student work is used to enable teachers to check for student mastery of the material taught and modify their future lesson plans to meet the needs still evident in the student work.	The teacher provided time for students to discuss how they know how a character felt during a story. She prompted students to cite text evidence to support their claim about how the character felt. She also had students review the exemplar to identify the character's feelings and two pieces of text evidence. These two activities allow the students to process the learning objective and provide the teacher with informal assessment on how students were progressing toward mastery. The lesson ended with all students completing the aligned performance task, which was to provide individual written responses to the prompt. Upon completion of the lesson, all of the students completed the written response. 92% of students'

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		written responses demonstrated mastery of the lesson objective.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you decide on the standards/objectives you will teach?
- How do you ensure the rigor of the learning is aligned to the rigor of the standard?
- How do you identify the sub-objectives for a lesson?
- How will you build background knowledge for students who need it to ensure they have equitable access to the lesson's objective?
- How do you decide on the method you will use to communicate the standards/objectives to students?
- How will you know if students understand the standards/objectives?
- How can students have opportunities to set goals and monitor their progress toward the lesson objective?
- How will students utilize and reference the visual of the standards/objectives during a lesson?
- How will the expectations for student performance be communicated to students?
- How will you know students understand the expectations for student performance?
- How will students make connections between previous learning and life experiences and the lesson 's objective?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective? What will this evidence look like?
- How will students know they have mastered the lesson's objective?

Motivating Students

Indicator Overview

This indicator focuses on a teacher's ability to organize and present the content to motivate students to learn. For a teacher to develop these types of learning experiences, a teacher must have in-depth knowledge of the students he/she teaches as well as the content being taught. Therefore, this indicator connects strongly to Teacher Knowledge of Students and Teacher Content Knowledge. When a teacher skillfully blends their knowledge of the content with their knowledge of how their students learn, the result is a rigorous, yet motivating learning experience. Both aspects are equally necessary to produce a successful learning experience in which students grow. A motivating lesson without a rigorous challenge does not increase student learning, nor does a rigorous lesson that does not entice students to engage in the learning.

For content to be personally meaningful to students, there must be a communicated purpose for student learning. Students need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is essential for them to master and how their mastery of this will impact their lives. When students believe in the value of the content, they are more likely to actively engage with the lesson content as owners of their learning. Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity, and exploration provide opportunities for students to generate questions and conduct their research or explore to locate the answers, all of which can lead to rigorous learning that extends beyond the lesson objective. When students can generate their questions about a given topic, their motivation to learn is usually increased as the learning becomes more student-directed than teacher-directed. As students engage in this type of self-directed learning by generating questions, developing inquiry, and initiating exploration, they are demonstrating ownership of learning.

Content and Curriculum Connections

This indicator articulates a teacher's ability to bring curriculum to life for students. Curriculum resources provide a launching pad for teachers to plan motivating and engaging lessons that support intellectual development and provide equity of access to rigorous instruction. Understanding how to motivate students using available curriculum resources is critical in engaging students.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students can articulate the purpose of the lesson and why it is important to them.
- Students grapple with concepts and explore the lesson materials.
- Students are motivated to accomplish the task and persevere through the assigned student work.
- Student ask questions, challenge ideas, and inquire about topics.
- Students thoughtfully consider various perspectives/alternatives/solutions, analyzing the pros and cons of each, before selecting one to support.

- Students initiate their own pursuit of answers and solutions.
- Students continue discussion about the learning outside of the designated time for the lesson.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Curiosity	A strong desire to learn or know something
Engaging	Explicit attention, curiosity, interest, or passion students demonstrate when learning
Exploration	Providing students with active learning experiences that include engaging visuals, hands-on experiences, and intellectually captivating content
Inquiry	Instruction that triggers and activates a student's curiosity

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
The teacher consistently organizes the content, including curriculum resources, so that it is personally meaningful, relevant, and intellectually engaging to students.	For content to be personally meaningful to students, there must be a communicated purpose for student learning. Students need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is essential for them to master and how their mastery of this will impact their lives. To authentically engage students in intellectually engaging lessons, a teacher must plan and implement rigorous and relevant curriculum through the use of instructional strategies that provide students with the opportunity to question, converse, and make deep learning connections.	A teacher presented a lesson on immigration during the 1860s. She brought in current newspaper articles on immigrants and refugees moving to the United States. Students also interviewed individuals who immigrated to the United States. These activities made the content studied personally meaningful and relevant to the students' lives.
The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued.	Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity, and exploration provide students opportunities to generate questions and conduct their research or explore to locate the answers. When students can generate their questions about a given topic, their motivation to learn is usually increased as the learning becomes more student-directed than teacher-directed.	Students also developed their questions to ask during the interviews, which provided experiences that value inquiry. Students created a campaign to tell stories of the immigrants that they interviewed, modeled after StoryCorps storytelling, to learn about the rich diversity in the local community.
Students are consistently engaged in their own learning, and the teacher reinforces students' initiative to learn more.	A learning environment where students are consistently engaged in their learning reflects a teacher who supports student ownership of learning. Teachers may reinforce students' initiative to learn in a variety of ways. Students may be encouraged to explore topics and questions they want to know more about. A teacher may also create opporutnities for students to research and discuss self-selected topics. When a teacher effectively uses academic feedback, he/she is also	As students completed the assigned student work on the historical implications of the 1860s, the teacher provided students with the opportunity to dig deeper into how to support local efforts for new immigrants in the community. A group of students discussed how creating a local Instagram campaign to highlight the benefits of welcoming, educating, and supporting immigrants was parallel to the rich historical contributions of diverse immigrant communities. The teacher commended the group and asked the students how she can support them in their efforts.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	reinforcing students' inititative to learn more by acknowledging students' questions and providing additional instruction and tasks to extend learning. This type of feedback supports an environment in which students feel safe taking risks and asking questions. In this way, it is reinforcing their initiative to learn more.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you organize the content of a lesson so that it is personally meaningful, relevant, and intellectually engaging to students?
- How will you ensure the lesson is both rigorous and motivating for all students?
- How do you develop learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to ask questions and explore?
- Why is it important for students to have opportunities to develop their own questions and explore for the answers?
- How will students be engaged in learning throughout the lesson and take initiative for their own learning?

Presenting Instructional Content

Indicator Overview

This indicator connects to the method(s) in which content is taught within a lesson. This indicator's descriptors address visuals and a teacher's ability to communicate performance expectations in a concise and logically sequenced manner. Visuals with examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels are essential tools to use when introducing new or rigorous concepts and can lead students to mastery of specific skills more efficiently. However, it may be that all of these are not included in one lesson. It is essential that they are used effectively and appropriately for the content and students taught.

Content and Curriculum Connections

For this indicator, a teacher must have deep understanding of the standards and the high-quality curriculum used to teach those standards. Understanding how to implement the curriculum and standards for the students in the classroom is critical. A teacher must be informed on the skills being taught to make instructional decisions about how to best to share, inform, scaffold, and present subject matter content.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students reference visuals and examples presented during the application of learning.
- Students utilize an example or exemplar to create or assess their work.
- Students record notes on the steps taken during the teacher model to ensure transfer.
- Students have the opportunity to reflect on their learning orally or in writing.

- Students reference previous anchor charts/visuals and use previously learned strategies fluently and appropriately.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Internal Summaries	An internal summary is a periodic pause during a lesson to review the steps the teacher and students have taken toward mastery of the daily objective. This pause cues the students into the learning and thinking that has been discussed. Internal summaries are excellent ways to reinforce and clarify ideas that are essential for the students to remember.
Modeling	Modeling is an instructional strategy in which the teacher demonstrates a new concept, thinking or learning approach. Students learn by observing and hearing the teacher think through processes out loud.
Performance Expectations	Performance expectations are requirements of a student, including expected results, behavior, criteria, and actions necessary to meet the objective or learning target. (Also known as measurement criteria).
Essential Information	Essential information is information that is extremely important or necessary to a particular lesson, situation, activity, or mastery of the objective.
Logical Sequencing and Segmenting	An effective sequence provides the learners with a relationship pattern so that each activity has a definite purpose. Proper sequencing also helps to avoid inconsistencies in the content of the instruction.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Presentation of content always includes …***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Visuals, including student work exemplars, that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson;	This descriptor refers to the effective use of visual materials to help the learner make connections to prior learning and clarify 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. Visuals can 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, both of which ensure equitable access to content for all learners: 1. visuals that assist in the learning process, and 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 or students. When a teacher continually reviews sub-objectives to connect to the next sub-objective, students are ultimately led to move toward mastery of the lesson objective. Internal summaries provide students opportunities to	The classroom walls displayed various anchor charts that included cues to support student recall and reading comprehension strategies. One example of a reading comprehension anchor chart was titled "Self-Questioning." The chart included a hand-drawn visual of two students reading a book with thought bubbles above their heads. Inside the thought bubbles, each student was asking themselves a different question. Below the visual read the words, "When you read something new, think of questions you have to support what you have read. Asking yourself questions about what is coming next will support your comprehension of the text." As students read the text independently, they referenced this visual and recorded questions they had about the text.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Presentation of content always includes …***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	have concepts restated and reflect within a lesson on what they are learning instead of waiting for a review of all concepts at the end of the lesson. Teachers can lead students in providing these summaries through their questions and group discussions.	
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. 1. Examples: When presenting a new or rigorous concept, carefully selected examples help students to understand information. 2. Illustrations: Teachers use images, such as diagrams, paintings, or photographs, to support student understanding of new concepts. 3. Analogies: Teachers use analogies to support student understanding of concepts. When setting students up to compare and contrast two texts, a first step may be to solidify the idea of comparing and contrasting two known items, such as an apple and an orange. 4. Labels: Labels help clarify information. Pictures with labels may also be used to introduce vocabulary, important people, or new concepts.	Application of the methods listed in this descriptor enhances learning in the following ways: 1. Examples: During a lesson about metaphors, the teacher used a poem to identify a metaphor and think aloud about its meaning to provide an example for her students. 2. Illustrations: Before dissecting a frog, students studied an illustration depicting the internal organs. ***3.*** Analogies: The comparison of appropriate graphic organizers to choosing appropriate tools to hammer in nails or tighten screws. The teacher explained to students that graphic organizers are "tools" to support their material, and different organizers support different tasks. ***4.*** Labels: During a study of the circulatory system, the teacher modeled how to label the heart parts and identify the function for each part.
Modeling by the teacher or student that demonstrates an accurate understanding of the content and meets performance expectations;	The ability to model new information, along with 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: 1. Know precisely what the expected outcome is. 2. Identify the critical elements of the desired outcome. 3. Create clearly defined steps so learners can achieve the desired outcome. 4. Provide examples for how the completed project/assignment should look. In classrooms where students regularly observe coherent instructional models, students acquire the skills necessary to provide coherent models for their peers.	The teacher explained to the students that the learning objective was for them to identify the physical characteristics of two characters from a novel and compare and contrast them. She told the students they would be expected to illustrate two characters from a novel the class was reading and then complete a Venn diagram to compare their characteristics. The teacher then chose two different characters to model her expectations and the thought process she went through to draw the characters. She explained how 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 two drawings' characteristics 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.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Presentation of content always includes …***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		As the teacher modeled her work 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. When modeling the assignment's expectations, the teacher clearly explained the order in which the students would need to complete the steps required for the assignment.
Criteria that clarifies how students can be successful;	Criteria is a concrete list of performance expectations for students to attend to throughout a lesson and to obtain mastery. In other words, success criteria provide students with explicit actions that overview what success will look and sound like throughout as they progress towards mastery. Success criteria are particularly helpful for students when they are engaging in rigorous learning and bearing a heavy cognitive load. Success criteria help learners to stay focused on the task at hand and have clarity about what their learning looks like.	One learning objective for the math choice board read: Students will represent and solve multiplication and division problems by using two different representations of the problem. The success criteria written on the choice board read: 1. Solve the problem 2. Explain what each number in the problem means 3. Explain what you chose to multiply or divide 4. Explain your representations and how they show multiplication or division
Concise communication; logical sequencing and segmenting; all essential information; and no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.	This descriptor relates to the teacher's knowledge of the content he/she is teaching and his/her ability to explain the content to students in a logical manner. For this to occur, the teacher must first clearly define the lesson's learning objective and then maintain the focus of the lesson on this objective, which may require a teacher 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 students' grade level and ability. The segmenting of the lesson includes lesson pacing and also relates to how a lesson is structured, how components of learning are broken down into sections that students can understand so that checks for mastery can occur throughtout the lesson. An effective teacher will provide sufficient time for introducing the lesson, the instruction within the lesson, the student activities, and closure. The lesson's segmenting allows sufficient time for each element of learning to	The teacher prepared a lesson agenda to stay on track with instruction for the day. 1. Review objective 2. Co-construct success criteria 3. Essential vocabulary review 4. Model performance expectations 5. Practice with table group 6. Work independently 7. Reflect on learning

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Presentation of content always includes …***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	take place so that students have opportunities to master the learning objective.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you decide on the types of visuals you will use during a lesson?
- How will these visuals support student learning?
- How do you expect students will use the visuals to support their learning?
- What examples, illustrations, analogies, or labels for new concepts will be used in the lesson? How will these support student learning?
- How do you expect that students will utilize the examples, illustrations, analogies, or labels to support their learning?
- Why is it important for the teacher and student to model performance expectations? How will the performance expectations be modeled in this lesson?
- How does the model of performance expectations provide equitable access to content for all learners?
- How will students clearly know the criteria 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 on the learning objectives during a lesson?
- When planning content that is especially rigorous, how does strategic presentation of that content impact students' learning?

Lesson Structure and Pacing

Indicator Overview

This indicator blends time and form as it applies to instruction. It addresses the lesson's effective segmenting 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 addressing "logical sequencing and segmenting" under Presenting Instructional Content. Teachers must thoughtfully structure and pace lessons so that students maintain motivation while continuous engaging with rigorous content. This intentional planning connects to Motivating Students and Standards and Objectives.

Content and Curriculum Connections

All lessons should consist of aligned, coherent structures, and organized to meet students' needs, with time for reflection to ensure student understanding. Teachers should align the coherent structure with their adopted curriculum when available. Anticipatory sets, direct instruction models, guiding questions, small group assignments, and checks for understanding are often mapped out within curriculum resources for daily lessons. This ensures that the progression of activities is logical and coherent.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students set goals and reflect on their learning orally or in writing.
- Students who complete lesson activities early engage in additional high-quality instructional activities.
- Students purposefully and easily move from one lesson activity to another when appropriate.
- Students are aware of time guidelines for their assignments. They monitor and adjust pacing accordingly.
- Students can explain the purpose of classroom routines and transitions.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Promptly	Students are engaged in a meaningful activity connected to the lesson objective at the beginning of the lesson period.
Coherent	A logical connection from one segment of the lesson to the next with a clear progression through the lesson.
Brisk	A pace that refers to the efficient and effective use of instructional time during the lesson.
Learning Rates	The amount of time it may take a student to complete a task.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
The lesson starts promptly.	Students should be engaged for the entirety of a lesson. All lessons should begin promptly to maximize the time students have to master the new concepts. Teachers should plan and implement opening activities that jump start student thinking aligned to the overall lesson objective.	As students entered the classroom, they saw the following displayed on the board: Greetings Scholars! Bell Work for Monday: Think about words that describe feelings. List as many as you can in 2 minutes and draw a picture that matches each word. Choose one word that stands out to you the most, and write two sentences with supporting details describing why you chose that word. You will have 7 minutes for this assignment.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
The lesson's structure is coherent, based on the content, and organized to meet students' needs, with time for reflection to ensure student understanding.	The structure of a lesson must be planned to ensure that there is coherence and alignment to the content that is being taught. When a teacher knows his/her students' various learning needs, they arrange the beginning, middle, and end of a lesson to meet those needs and ensure there is time for reflection to gauge their understanding.	The following is the structure of a lesson aligned to the standard: ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1, "Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferences drawn from the text." The lesson's learning objective is: I can write 1-2 paragraphs of a letter in my assigned character's voice for our current text, describing their experiences before the disaster and including supporting details. • Beginning of the lesson: Review of challenging text vocabulary and whole class character profiles review. • Middle of the lesson: Students will work in groups with the same character to role-play, followed by a whole class discussion on the learning from the role-playing activity. The teacher will model writing 2-3 sentences based on her character from the text. • End of the lesson: Students will write 1-2 paragraphs from their character's point of view using supporting details. Students will reflect on the lesson using the writing rubric provided by the teacher.
Pacing is brisk, adjusted for the rigor of content and individual student learning expectations.	"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 to address the rigor of the content? Did the lesson continue to flow, or was there time wasted in which students were not focused or engaged in the learning? When the pacing is adjusted for the rigor of content and individual learning expectations, the teacher facilitates student movement toward increasingly challenging and engaging work. Therefore, 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 instructions that they have already mastered. This descriptor connects to the Academic Feedback indicator; specifically, a teacher's use of student feedback to monitor and	The elements of this lesson are structured to be completed during a 75-minute ELA block. The teacher planned an anticipated timeframe for each segment to ensure efficient use of each minute. She determined that the bulk of the time will be spent on students writing their paragraphs and has planned all other lesson parts around that segment. The majority of students show evidence of engagement until the middle of the lesson. She notices that several students zone out during the whole class discussion on the role-playing activity. She says, "Let's change this discussion up. I will call on random scholars to answer the following question: Tell me one thing you discovered about your character during the role-playing that you overlooked from reading the text. I will give everyone 40 seconds to think about your response."

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	adjust instruction. This ensures that the lesson's pacing is brisk and meets the needs of all students.	
Students' individual needs are attended to, and pacing provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates.	The challenge presented in this indicator is the ability to attend to the individual needs of students, as well as provide enough time so that all students of varying rates of learning can complete each learning task. Therefore, it is essential that a teacher knows the various learning needs of his/her students, their anticipated learning difficulties, and has planned for them.	The teacher planned for students' individual needs by intentionally organizing the groups. By doing this, she knew which groups might need additional supports to complete the goal of the group assignment. In addition to this, she differentiated the letter templates for students she knew might need assistance by starting their thoughts for the writing assignment. Students who typically finish at a faster rate were given a piece of paper with a prompt to resume reading the text where they had left off.
Students understand and engage in classroom routines to ensure efficient use of time.	When students understand classroom routines, they should be able to explain them to someone else in their own words and carry them out with minimal redirection from the teacher. Checks for understanding are as critical to routines as they are to content material. This ensures that time is being used efficiently throughout the day or class period.	This was not the first-time students worked in groups. They were aware of the classroom routine. However, the teacher asked the following questions before students transitioned into groups: ● Point to where your specific group will be working on this task. ● How long do you have in your groups? ● Where can you find the countdown clock for this activity? ● What is each person responsible for sharing out when we return our whole class discussion? Students were also aware of the class code to end their discussion and return to their assigned seats within 45 seconds. The teacher said, "Scholars unite," and students returned to their seats within the expected time. Finally, students were aware of the independent work routine in the class. The teacher asked the following questions before students started working on their ending assignment: ● Who are you working with on this assignment? ● How much time do you have to complete the assignment? ● What should you do if you complete the assignment before the timer goes off? Students were able to answer these questions and follow the routines, ensuring they understood the efficient use of time.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you decide on how you will segment different parts of a lesson? How will these segments ensure student understanding?
- How do you plan for effective closure and reflection within a lesson?
- How will the lesson be adjusted to allow for depth and rigor of content and individual student expectations?
- How do you plan to pace the lesson to provide 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?
- How does the structure of the lesson promote student ownership?
- How does the structure and pacing of the lesson ensure that students maintain motivation while continuously engaging with rigorous content?

Activities and Materials

Indicator Overview

This indicator addresses the variety and appropriateness of activities and materials that a teacher implements during a lesson. In order to fully leverage the chosen activities and materials toward student ownership and learning, a teacher must first establish a classroom environment that is positive and supportive for all learners. Therefore, this indicator is closely related to the indicators in the Environment domain. When creating a classroom environment that optimizes learning for all students, a teacher must consider both physical aspects of the environment and the classroom atmosphere that will influence the success of and engagement in learning activities to be carried out in daily lessons. After establishing academic classroom expectations that are clear and rigorous, a teacher can fully leverage activities and materials to achieve the learning goals. When students feel welcomed and empowered to take intellectual risks in their classrooms, they can interact with activities and materials that develop their learning.

When applying this indicator to a lesson, it is particularly critical that activities and materials support lesson objectives and are challenging for all students. To plan appropriately rigorous activities and materials, a teacher must know the students' needs and interests and ensure that activities and materials are purposeful in supporting students in meeting the learning objective.

When planning, a teacher should first identify the desired student outcome for the lesson and the lesson success criteria and then plan the activities and materials that support student learning. The selected activities and materials should align with students' needs and allow students to engage in deep thinking and problem-solving, ensuring that students have time to learn and apply the content learning.

Content and Curriculum Connections

The curriculum provides teachers with the **what** of the daily lesson. The activities and materials are part of **how** the content is delivered to maximize student ownership and learning. Once a teacher knows the standard(s) and the content to be taught, she can create an objective for learning and/or utilize objectives shared in the curriculum being used. In planning for effective instruction, a teacher must plan and choose activities that align with the full depth of the rigor of the standard and then leverage the activities and materials to directly and succinctly move students toward mastery of the objective. These activities are often a component of a formative assessment a teacher will use to monitor student learning or scaffold/extend the skill for students at various levels of skill.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students share how what they are doing connects with the lesson objective.
- Students explain how the lesson's activities build their understanding and lead toward mastery of the lesson objective.
- Students use the activities and materials to construct their understanding and learning.
- Students demonstrate enjoyment in the completion of activities and a desire to continue work.
- Students are cognitively engaged in tasks that facilitate thinking and interaction.
- Students ask questions and generate ideas for further learning during lesson activities.
- Students learn with and from one another while interacting with each other in collaborative group activities.
- Students complete work that meets the teacher's expectations.
- Students reflect on their progress toward mastery of the objective.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Activities	Activities are actions students and teachers take that are designed and deployed by the teacher to create the conditions for learning or the implementation of learning.
Materials	Materials are supplies and resources a teacher uses to implement practical activities that help students meet the learning objective.
Supplementary Resources	Supplementary resources include materials, ideas, examples, textbooks, and videos available to a teacher to enhance and differentiate their lesson to reach all or specific students.
Support **Standards-based** **Challenge** **Elicit**	These content-related Key Terms describe the relationship between a lesson's activities and materials and the lesson's objective(s). The activities and materials should provide a succinct path toward mastery with direct alignment with the standards while challenging students and eliciting various thinking. These student responses cannot occur without the teacher having a clear and thorough understanding of the standard and the path towards mastery.
Relevant **Sustain** **Interaction** **Evoke** **Self-direction**	These student-centered Key Terms describe the interaction students should have with the lesson's activities and materials. Effective activities and materials evoke curiosity and suspense and are relevant to students' lives. Activities and materials should sustain students' attention both individually and in collaborative groups while providing the opportunity for self-direction.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario</th></tr>
<tr><th>Rubric Descriptor
Activities and materials include all of the following …</th><th>Explanation</th><th>Possible Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td>Content:
● support the lesson objectives
● are challenging
● elicit a variety of thinking
● provide time for reflection
● are relevant to students' lives</td><td>When applying this indicator to a lesson, it is critical that activities and materials support the content being taught and create a meaningful learning experience.

First, the activities and materials must thoughtfully be selected so that they support the lesson objective. 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 and elicit a variety of thinking, 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 and Thinking indicators.</td><td rowspan="2">A teacher assessed students and realized that the students were experiencing difficulty in making inferences. He established the learning objective: Students will be able to identify details in text and use their own experiences to develop an appropriate inference. He designed the lesson with several activities:
• Students were to work in pairs to identify details from the text that connected to the inference question asked.
• Students would think of an experience they had that connected to the text and then 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:
• Support the lesson objectives: The activities supported the objective for students to make an inference.
• Elicit a variety of thinking: He determined that when students are asked to infer, they are thinking at a higher level. A question he was sure to ask was: "How did you develop your inference? Why was it appropriate?"
• Provide time for reflection: There was time for reflection in the lesson when the students were told to reflect on how the process had supported them.
• Relevant to students' lives: 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.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Student-centered:
● sustain students' attention
● provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction
● evoke student curiosity and suspense
● provide students with choices</td><td>Effectively curated activities and materials will bring the content to life, creating a learning experience that sustains students' attention and evokes both curiosity and suspense. Activities and materials should also provide students with opportunities to interact with and learn alongside and from their peers as well make meaningful choices about their learning.</td></tr>
</table>

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor **Activities and materials include all of the following …**	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Multiple materials: ● incorporate multimedia and technology ● incorporate additional standards-based resources where appropriate to support individual and whole group understanding (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.)	The descriptor "incorporate additional standards-based resources where appropriate" relates to the use of materials beyond a textbook or manipulatives provided in curriculum tool kits. This may also include the use of photographs, novels, picture books, personal artifacts, etc.	• Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction: Students also had opportunities for student-to-student interaction when they paired and shared. • Evoke curiosity and suspense: Student curiosity and suspense was provided as students continued reading text or conducting research to learn if their inference was correct. • Provide students with 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 The lesson included a prepared interactive Google Classroom landing page that students could refer to during and after the lesson. The landing page included links to additional content support and extension activities that students could choose to complete when finished with the assigned student work.
• In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction, and students are continuously self-monitoring.	This last descriptor prompts teachers to think of how to design and implement rigorous activities that prompt students to engage in self-directed learning that at times feels game-like to students who an authentically engaged and are able to monitor their progress towards mastery.	As a culminating project of a literature study, students were challenged to implement the design process to envision and create a board game that other students in the class could play to recall how the story structure conveyed the theme of the story. One group read, "The One and Only Ivan." They decided to design a game related to perseverance: how characters persevere through challenges and rely on one another. The title of their game was "Escape to the Zoo." The group tied the game to the enduring understanding of perseverance and character development, which was the literature study focus standard. The students brainstormed how each character developed over time, and then transferred their critical understanding to game cards that would allow a player to advance their piece when they selected a card that demonstrated perseverance. Group members created a board with multiple paths and routes player could take to make it to the ending point at the Zoo. During the next series of literature studies, students could play the games to interact and discuss the concept of the lesson.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How can you be sure the selected activities and materials support the learning and guide students directly toward mastery of the lesson objective?
- How will you provide challenging activities and materials for all students in my class?
- How will you maintain all students' attention during the lesson?
- How will you allow for meaningful student-to-student interaction so that students can learn with and from one another?
- What activities and which materials will best set the conditions to evoke student curiosity and suspense?
- How will you provide students with significant choices related to the content?
- How will students create and self-monitor their own learning?
- How will you allow for authentic reflection at the close of the learning experience?

Questioning

Indicator Overview

Questioning is a skill that can deepen student understanding and ownership. The rubric descriptors provide a basic framework for the types of questions to ask within a lesson and how teachers lead students in responding to questions. Questions should be aligned to the standards and curriculum and increase rigor and student ownership. The descriptors within this indicator can, for the most part, be categorized into content-related descriptors, which focus on purposeful alignment with the content, and procedural-related descriptors, which focus on the processes of engaging students in asking and answering questions during learning. Both categories of descriptors are necessary for optimal student learning. Posing rigorous questions without established procedures for responding does not provide an opportunity for all students to engage in critical thinking. Additionally, clearly established procedures for responding to questions cannot support learning if the posed questions are not rigorous and aligned to the content.

<u>Content-Related Descriptors</u>

These descriptors are related to the use of various high-quality and content-driven questions to support student learning. To develop high-quality questions, a teacher must first identify a clear lesson objective and use their depth of content knowledge to align content to the standard, so this indicator is closely related to Standards and Objectives and Teacher Content Knowledge. Content-related descriptors include:

- Teacher questions are varied and high quality, providing an appropriate mix of question types:
  - Knowledge and comprehension;
  - Application and analysis; and
  - Creation and evaluation.
- Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.

- The frequency of questions consistently engages students in the rigor of the content and critical thinking.
- Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.

Procedural-Related Descriptors

Several descriptors are focused on procedural operations that help create a classroom environment that supports and encourages critical thinking for all classroom members. The establishment of procedures such as these also helps to communicate both academic and behavioral expectations for learning. Therefore, this indicator is closely related to the Environment and Expectations indicators in the Environment domain. These procedural descriptors include:

- The frequency of questions consistently engages students in the rigor of the content and critical thinking.
- Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided.
- Students regularly respond to a variety of teacher questions (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers).
- All students are actively answering questions and engaging with the teacher or each other to share their perspectives.
- Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

Content and Curriculum Connections

High-quality curricular materials include questions aligned to the written standards to help teachers ask students questions related to the lesson objective. When available, teachers should review the questions for alignment and rigor. Aligned and rigorous questions provided in curriculum resources can serve as a launch for student discussion and inquiry. Teachers may need to create additional questions to build background knowledge and scaffold learning for students. Teachers should plan for how and when they will sequence the use of questions throughout the lesson to create opportunities for students to engage in critical thinking about the content and their learning.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students respond to a variety of questions throughout the lesson to build an understanding of the lesson objective.
- Students actively discuss responses to questions with partners, small groups, or whole-class discussions (such as Socratic Seminars).
- Students generate individual responses to questions before sharing with other students or the class.
- Students are inquisitive and generate questions to deepen their thinking and learning.
- Students use each other's questions to spark additional questions and generate further inquiry.
- Students take the initiative to ask clarifying questions as needed or push thinking.
- Students question their own work through reflective practices in order to prompt new learning and challenge themselves.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Question types	There are different types of questions that a teacher should plan to use throughout a lesson. When possible, questions should scaffold student thinking and progress toward mastery of the standard.
Knowledge and comprehension questions	Questions that ask for student recall of basic knowledge facts aligned to the standard.
Application and analysis questions	Questions that require students to apply their understanding of the learning to similar concepts or scenarios.
Creation and evaluation questions	Questions that require students to synthesize their learning and to transfer their learning to create meaning.
These **content-related** Key Terms refer to the power of utilizing strategically designed questions to deepen student learning.	
Purposeful	When questions are purposeful, they intentionally build on the student learning and understanding of the lesson objective.
Sequenced	Appropriately sequenced questions refer to how a teacher orders questions strategically to scaffold student understanding.
Rigor	When purposeful questions are sequenced appropriately in a lesson, students are continuously engaged in rigorous and critical thinking, allowing them to construct their own understanding at a deep level.
These **procedural-related** Key Terms refer to strategies' teachers can leverage to ensure all students are engaged in critical thinking and responding to questions.	
Active responses	Active responses are those that require all students to engage in answering questions through whole group responses, turn and talk opportunities, or writing answers on a white board, among other examples.
Wait time	Providing appropriate wait time between when a question is asked and students are expected to respond creates opportunities for all students to be engaged in thinking about the content.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Teacher questions are varied and high-quality, providing an appropriate mix of question types based on content: ● knowledge and comprehension; ● application and analysis; and ● creation and evaluation.	For support in generating questions, it is essential that a teacher understands the level of rigor of the standard and how questions can prompt and scaffold student thinking. It is important to note how higher-order questions will impact the evidence for the descriptors under related indicators, including Thinking and Problem-Solving. Questions at the knowledge and comprehension levels often do not align with the rigor required of the standard. Teachers should strive to include a variety of scaffolded, leveled questions to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn at the highest level of rigor.	Example 1: After posing a thoughtful question, the teacher reminded the class of the expectation to not raise hands or call out during the quiet "think time" so that all students would be given the opportunity to develop ideas. She connected this to one of their scholarly behaviors of "not stealing learning from other scholars." She instructed students to use the time to think about what their response would be and how they could best communicate their thoughts cohesively. Students were then prompted to turn and discuss responses with a partner, expecting that they would share out their partner's response after the discussion. This method provided a way to hold each student accountable for formulating a response and actively listening to their partner. Each partner took a turn sharing their thoughts,
Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.	When teachers ask purposeful and coherent questions, they are creating opportunities to gain feedback from their students about the depth of learning. Teachers can further strengthen this practice by adjusting instruction based on student responses to the questions.	

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
The frequency of questions consistently engages students in the rigor of the content and critical thinking.	Consistent engagement in critical thinking maintains rigorous academic expectations of the classroom environment and provides students continuous opportunities to deepen their learning.	and the teacher then pulled a numbered popsicle stick from a can and called out the shown number. The student whose class number was called stood and shared their partner's response. That student then chose a classmate to share next. Example 2: The first questions discussed within the Socratic Seminar circle were questions developed by the teacher. Students prepared responses with cited text evidence and follow-up questions before the seminar. As students' understanding of the concepts presented in the text deepened throughout the meaningful discussion, they began to generate their own questions that pushed their thinking even more. If there was a moment when the dialogue stalled, the teacher inserted another prepared question that reinvigorated a new line of thinking. Students were also given the opportunity to turn outside their fishbowl set up and privately consult their "wingman" partner, who sat behind them, generating written questions and responses ready to share with their partner as needed. Partners rotated roles throughout the process. After the seminar, all students individually responded in writing to one overarching synthesis question.
Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.	When asking questions that are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals, teachers can then utilize students' responses as a formative assessment in determining which students have mastered the learning objective.	
Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided.	When providing wait time for students, it is essential for the teacher to label this for students so that she may use the opportunity to teach students how they play a role in creating a positive learning environment for their peers. When they allow one another to have adequate think time, they contribute positively to the classroom's environment, which is connected to the Respectful Culture descriptor.	
Students regularly respond to a variety of teacher questions (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers).	Teachers should require active responses from each student to monitor understanding for all. Using a combination of total participation techniques and individual student responses allows the teacher to gauge the class's overall understanding and probe for deeper learning and thinking with specific students.	
All students are actively answering questions and engaging with the teacher or each other to share their perspectives.	Utilizing methods that ensure every student has the opportunity to respond ensures that all students have the opportunity to engage in thinking and learning. These methods also help a teacher avoid repeatedly calling on the same students or calling only on volunteers who may have their hands raised.	
Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.	An 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 essential for them to know the different question types. These can be modeled for them through the teacher's questions and purposeful teaching of Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge. By providing students opportunities to generate questions, teachers also develop learning experiences where inquiry is valued and provide students with choices.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How will you plan for questions that increase rigor and student ownership?
- How will you decide on the types and frequency of questions asked during a lesson?
- Why is it essential for you to ask higher-order questions during a lesson?
- Why is it essential to plan intentional questions aligned to the lesson's standard/expected outcome?
- What types of questions might you need to ask to gather evidence of students' thinking?
- How will you provide opportunities for all students to respond to your questions?
- How will you ensure that all students have equal opportunities to answer questions and discuss responses with one another?
- How will you ensure that students have the opportunity to interact with each other about their learning?
- How will you ensure wait time is provided for all students during a lesson?
- How will you model ways to generate self-directed questions aligned to the learning for students?
- Why is it essential for students to have opportunities to develop their own questions and search for the answers?

Academic Feedback

Indicator Overview

This indicator focuses on how teachers respond to students' comments and questions. The descriptors address the quality of the feedback in supporting student learning instead of feedback that only informs students of the accuracy of their responses. The deepest levels of learning are achieved when meaning is constructed by the learner rather than when knowledge is imparted from the teacher to the learner. Effective feedback prompts student thinking, which is often accomplished by asking questions. Therefore, this indicator is closely related to the Questioning indicator. For feedback to be effective, it must be within a classroom environment that supports intellectual risk-taking, curiosity, and empowerment.

The purpose of feedback is twofold: first, to gauge student learning, and second, to adjust instruction based on the current student learning. The descriptors also clarify how feedback is a reciprocal process between teachers and students as well as between students. Feedback is given and received by all involved. It does not only flow from teachers to students.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Throughout the delivery of a lesson based on high-quality curriculum, teachers should use academic vocabulary that references the language of the standards and that is accurate for the content. As a teacher responds to a student's response or attempt, similar vocabulary should be used.

Research shows that feedback has double the impact that regular teaching strategies have on student achievement. Feedback is information that you give to your students that helps them close the gap between where they are now with their work and where they could be. The goal of feedback is to provide students with insight that helps them to improve their performance.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- There is evidence that student proficiency increases as a result of feedback that is provided.
- Students seek out teacher and peer feedback.
- Students use the feedback given to them to improve their learning and work.
- Students provide their peers feedback using language from the success criteria to support student progress.
- Students engage in academic conversations with the curriculum.
- Students accept feedback, internalize the information provided, and modify their understanding of lesson content learning.
- Students articulate how feedback helps them understand where they are in the learning process and where they need to improve.
- Students hold themselves and each other accountable for learning by formulating feedback and sharing their thinking.
- Students use feedback to self-monitor their learning and progression toward their goals.
- Students understand/articulate the role feedback plays in their learning.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Focused, frequent, and of high quality	High-quality feedback • is explicitly aligned to student learning (focused), • causes the student to think, • is provided in a timely manner (frequent), and • brings the student's attention to the academic language aligned to the lesson's objective.
Circulation	This practice involves the teacher walking around the classroom and listening as students work individually, in pairs, or during group work. This provides the teacher with the ability to ask and answer questions, listen in to student discussions, and provide feedback.
Teacher-to-student feedback	This type of feedback is teacher-led feedback and can provide a model for students to engage in feedback to one another.
Student-to-student feedback	In contrast to feedback from teacher to student, this type of feedback is student-led. Students engaging in collaborative learning by providing each other feedback about their work is characteristic of a classroom learning environment that is student-owned and values critical thinking.
Student-to-teacher feedback	This type of feedback is what the teacher gains from students, both verbally and non-verbally, during the lesson that lets the teacher know what students have learned so far and informs her next steps to continue her students' learning.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario</th></tr>
<tr><th>Rubric Descriptor</th><th>Explanation</th><th>Possible Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td>Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality.</td><td>High-quality feedback is defined as feedback related to the lesson objective or sub-objective and causes students to think. High-quality feedback is also specific, timely, and is varied to meet the unique needs of the students and classroom. This definition applies to the use of oral and written feedback, but a teacher does not need to provide oral and written feedback to show evidence of this indicator.</td><td rowspan="4">The objective of a lesson identified by a teacher was: "Students, today you will learn about one way to form a paragraph. We will formulate a topic sentence and at least three supporting sentences. Then we will end the paragraph with a summary statement."

She provided a graphic organizer after they collectively developed a topic sentence. Then, while the children wrote the supporting details independently, she provided feedback. The following feedback was recorded:
● "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?"

While circulating the classroom to check in on students as they worked together to refine their writing, the teacher noticed six students were struggling to write a summary statement. The teacher called the six students to a table in the back and reviewed the lesson exemplar, including a strong summary statement. She worked with the group to orally discuss possible summary statements for their writing. Each student shared their revised summary statement aloud and then wrote their statement to complete their writing.

After the students completed their writing, the teacher paired them to conference on each other's writing. To ensure students knew her expectations for the conferences, she paired with a</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and review of independent work assignments.</td><td>High-quality feedback can be a cornerstone for student understanding and mastery. Thus, teachers must plan to provide feedback at critical points during a lesson. Teachers need to model for students how to provide high-quality academic feedback so that students can then provide each other with high-quality academic feedback.</td></tr>
<tr><td>The teacher circulates during instructional activities to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress based on student work expectations, and provide individual feedback.</td><td>When students are engaged and collaborating, a teacher must walk around the classroom and learn to listen to students' conversations. Teachers should be listening for key phrases that indicate common misconceptions or on-track learning and then provide aligned feedback that prompts student thinking. This can only be accomplished through gaining clarity in the learning progression when planning and then actively listening and checking in with individuals and groups of students during the lesson.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Feedback, both verbal and non-verbal, from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust</td><td>During a lesson, a teacher asks many questions of students. When students' answers are not accurate, the teacher needs to</td></tr>
</table>

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
instruction.	prepare to reteach or explain the content learning in another way to facilitate student understanding.	student and modeled the questions and type of feedback she would provide to the student. Within this model, she explained that it is essential for students to clearly explain why an area of the writing is strong and why another needs to be strengthened. She did this by providing high-quality feedback focused on the lesson objective of writing a topic sentence, supporting details, and summary statement. Along with this model, the teacher included written feedback on the student's writing focused on the objective.
Students give specific and clear feedback to each other based on the teacher's expectations.	Students can effectively prompt each other's thinking through feedback when the success criteria and lesson expectations are clear and a model for giving feedback has been provided.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How can you be sure the academic feedback you provide prompts student thinking?
- How can you be sure the academic feedback you provide helps students identify the strengths and next steps in their work?
- How will you move from corrective feedback to feedback that empowers students?
- At what points in the lesson will you be gaining feedback from your students to inform the next steps of instruction?
- What will you look and listen for as you circulate the classroom?
- How will you know if your students have misconceptions about the content or if they are on-track in their learning? What will you do about it?
- How will you use student feedback to adjust your instruction?
- How can you create opportunities for students to provide academic feedback to each other to deepen their learning?
- How can you ensure that the student-to-student feedback is aligned to the standard and success criteria?
- What will you expect to hear in the student-to-student feedback as evidence of high-quality feedback and what will you need to do first to ensure that it takes place?
- How will you structure protocols for student-to-student feedback?
- Where in the lesson are opportune times for students to self-assess in relation to the lesson's success criteria and expectations?
- How will students use feedback to monitor their own learning and progression toward their goals?

Grouping Students

Indicator Overview

This indicator addresses 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.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Lessons should be structured in such a way that students have an opportunity to learn from their peers. To ensure high-quality collaboration that is aligned to the rigor of the standard and content, teachers should reference the collaborative practices planned out in their curriculum. Many curriculum resources are written to provide practices such as small group discussions, activities, and skill practice using questions, problems, and scenarios.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students can explain what their expectations look and sound like during their instructional grouping arrangements.
- Students ask questions and seek clarification when unclear of group role, task, and work expectations.
- Students clarify and commit to their individual and collective roles within the instructional group and the consequences of seeing it through.
- Students set goals as well as reflect and evaluate their learning during the group activity.
- Students choose their groups based on a desire to reach the intended outcome of the assignment.
- Students take the initiative to develop a plan to solve a task or problem in more than one way.
- Students complete work that meets the teacher's expectations individually and as a group.
- Students reflect on their progress toward mastery of the objective within their group.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Grouping Arrangements	Grouping arrangments refers to student grouping compositions including individual, partner, small groups (2-5), or the whole group.
Efficiency	Efficiency in learning refers to knowledge gained as a result of instruction, an activity, or discussion.
Expectations	Expectations are the intentional use of learning targets and the pathway to mastery.
Accountability	When a student assumes accountability, they take responsibility for their role (individual or collective). They seek to clarify what is expected of them and commit to carrying out their task, understanding that they are part of a bigger picture.
Varied	When a teacher has varied instructional grouping, they consider the lesson's goal and plan for mixed compositions to ensure equitable groups.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
The instructional grouping arrangements (whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency.	Instructional grouping is used to: ● Ensure that all students learn. ● Increase engagement. ● Promote social and collaborative skill development. ● Promote peer feedback. ● Engage students in various critical thinking skills. ● Engage students to approach problem-solving from different methods. Instructional grouping arrangements should have a specific purpose and contribute to positive learning outcomes for students. Therefore, the task to be completed should determine the type of arrangement to be used. The teacher should ask which arrangement will best maximize students' understanding of the content and yield positive learning results. For this to occur, the teacher must have a clear understanding of the grouping activity and a thorough knowledge of the intended level of student interaction and meaningful group roles necessary for learning to be efficient. A teacher's ability to group students based on this knowledge is directly connected to his/her knowledge of the students and their needs, interests, abilities, and knowledge of subject-specific strategies.	During a 7th grade science lesson, the teacher identified the day's learning objective: "I can create an analogy of cell organelles to school." It aligns with the standard MS-LS1-2: Develop and use a model to describe a cell's function as a whole and how the parts of cells contribute to the function. Students completed the task during a 20-minute small group structure. Students chose four-cell organelles, read their descriptions and discussed what person, place, or thing they compared to the organelle in their school. They were responsible for drawing an outline of the school, drawing and labeling each organelle, and writing a brief description of how the two items are similar. It was evident that the teacher identified the best grouping arrangement to maximize student understanding and learning for this task as students were able to complete the task successfully with support from their peers.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Teacher sets clear expectations that are understood by students.	This descriptor refers not only to setting clear expectations for what students are to do to support their learning but also set clear expectations for procedures and student behavior during the grouping arrangement. Models may include the use of visuals, student demonstration, anchor papers, rubrics to demonstrate how student work will be assessed, or written steps the students are to follow when in groups. Expectations for each group member and the expectation for the group as a whole should be clearly explained. Procedures for obtaining materials for the group work, the expected noise level, where students may work, and other steps should all be clearly explained. To ensure that expectations are understood, students could explain to someone else in the classroom.	The teacher shared with students that the goal for the instructional groups is to: ● choose four-cell organelles; ● read their descriptions and discuss what person, place, or object they would compare the organelle to school; ● draw an outline of the school; ● draw and label each organelle; and ● write a brief description of how the two items are similar. To ensure that students understood the learning objective and that the students had access to a clear student work exemplar, the teacher modeled the above activities comparing cell organelles to a city instead of a school. The teacher also provided an anchor chart to provide specific expectations. After modeling the grouping assignment's expectations, the teacher asked students questions to check for understanding of the assignment.
In an instructional group, each student takes responsibility for their individual role, tasks, and group work expectations so they can have meaningful and productive collaboration.	When students take responsibility for their role within the grouping structure, they know what is expected of them for their assigned task. They listen and can repeat their assigned title back to the teacher or other members of the group, as well as provide a summary of their job description. They gather the resources needed to carry out their role and perform the functions with little to no direction from others. Students are also open to peer feedback to ensure that the collaboration time is productive and of high quality.	The following three roles, along with their descriptions, were established for the 7th grade science class grouping activity: Artist: As the artist, I am responsible for drawing the outline of the school, four-cell organelles, and the person, place, or object we are comparing them to in a school. I will also participate in the discussion to identify an appropriate analogy. Researcher: As the researcher, I am responsible for locating the cell organelles in our science text, reading their descriptions out loud, and summarizing their primary function. I will write down the organelles we select on our activity checklist. I will also participate in the discussion to identify an appropriate analogy. Editor: As the editor, I am responsible for labeling the organelles on the drawing. I will also write a brief description of how each organelle and school object functions on our activity checklist. I will also participate in the discussion to identify an appropriate analogy. After the teacher displayed the above descriptions and verbally communicated each role and its responsibility, students moved into their groups. The following dialogue took place once

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		groups were assembled: Teacher: “Would all of the artists raise their hands. What are you responsible for during this assignment?” Student: “I have to draw the school outline and the cell parts and help come up with the analogies.” Teacher: “Would all of the editors raise their hands. Where will you be writing the descriptions on how the cell part and school objects are similar?” Student: “On the activity checklist.” Teacher: “Would all of the researchers raise their hand. What information will be researched while the artist is drawing the school outline?” Student: “I will find the names of cell organelles and what they do.” The teacher displayed and started the 20-minute timer. Students gathered the resources needed to carry out their specific roles and began the task.
In an instructional group, each student assumes accountability for completing group work and individual work.	When students assume accountability for completing group work, they ask clarifying questions when uncertain, and they monitor the time they have been given for the task. They show commitment to their role by being active participants who are engaged and reflective in their contribution. They understand the contribution of their task to the completion of the outcome of the assignment.	While working on the cell analogy group assignment, one of the students assigned the role of an artist has a question about his role. Student: “Do I have to draw the cell part and the school part that I am comparing it to?” Students monitored the amount of time remaining on the countdown clock and gave the artist feedback that he might not have all four parts drawn in time. He adjusted his speed of drawing to ensure the assignment gets completed. When the countdown timer ended, students initialed next to the role on the activity checklist.
Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to best accomplish the goals of the lesson.	Instructional groups that include diverse compositions encourage interaction, friendship, and equity at the classroom and school level. By varying ability levels within groups, teachers provide examples of assisting behaviors for learners that may be struggling.	If the teacher predetermined groups, the following considerations would be made for their composition: ● Does each group have a student with the ability to redirect the analogies' conversation if it is not headed in the right direction? ● Are there any groups that are composed of the same gender? If so, which student can be moved to ensure different viewpoints are considered while the lesson goal is still accomplished? ● Are there any groups that are composed of the same race? If so, which student can be

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		moved to ensure different viewpoints are considered while the lesson goal is still accomplished?
Students set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning in instructional groups.	This descriptor exemplifies student ownership during instructional grouping. When students own this time, it will be evident by their actions. In order for ownership to occur, must engage in this descriptor. Students must first be aware of the expectations while learning in groups, only then can they set goals, provide feedback to peers, adjust and self-assess.	While working on the cell analogy group assignment, each group set a goal to extend their learning and do the following: ● Pick and additional organelle to compare, label and draw; or ● Explain in 2-3 sentences what might happen to the cell if one of the organelles they chose was not functioning properly. When the regular activity timer ended, students decided on which extension goal they would complete in the next 5 minutes. They also reflect on their group's overall knowledge of a cell structure and evaluate, using the activity rubric, if they have met the success criteria.
When provided the choice or independence, students make responsible decisions about how to group themselves.	Offering students the choice in how to group themselves has many benefits, such as increased ownership and increased quality of the intended product. However, the teacher must be explicit in communicating the expectations during the group activity. The roles and responsibilities within each group as well as expected outcome within the allotted time should be communicated before students determine their groups. In addition to this, the teacher should teach students how to make responsible decisions by thinking about factors like their individual strengths, knowledge of the content and personal goals for the lesson, and areas they have identified they need to grow in. When	The teacher decided to allow students choice in how to group themselves into triads for the cell analogy assignment. She displayed the following roles and responsibilities: Artist: As the artist, I am responsible for drawing the outline of the school, four-cell organelles and the person, place, or object we are comparing them to in a school. I will also participate in the discussion to identify an appropriate analogy. Researcher: As the researcher, I am responsible for locating the cell organelles in our science text, reading their descriptions out loud and summarizing their main function. I will write down the organelles we select on our activity checklist. I will also participate in the discussion to identify an appropriate analogy. Editor: As the editor, I am responsible for labeling the organelles on the drawing. I will also write a brief description on how each organelle and school object is similar in function on our activity checklist. I will also participate in the discussion to identify an appropriate analogy. She also explained that this is a graded assignment and at the end of class they will be responsible for picking any three cell organelles and naming their function.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	students take ownership in this thinking they will be more likely to make a responsible decision.	She stated the following, "In a few minutes, I am going to let you choose your group. You will only have 60 seconds to form groups. While you might be tempted to choose your closest friends, keep in mind the three roles and what each one is responsible for. They might be nice friends, but will they stay on task? Do you trust them with your grade? Remember this assignment will be graded and you are responsible for learning while working and will have an exit ticket where you have to name three cell organelles and their function. I would not advise you to work with peers where you know the conversation will be off topic. You will only have 20 minutes so it is important that you all are focused. If you feel that you can do that with your close friend, then go for it. Make responsible decisions. Your 60 seconds starts now."

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?
- How does the type of activity or segment within a lesson impact the instructional grouping for that activity or segment?
- Why is it important to think about how you group students? That being said, what are things you consider when forming groups (or partners) and why?
- How can you ensure students know what is expected of them so they can take responsibility for their individual roles?
- How can you ensure each role is meaningful and students assume accountability for completing their task?
- How do you model or communicate your expectations to students for their own work and that of the group? How do you check for understanding of the expectations?
- How do you assess the performance of groups and individuals when work is completed in a group setting?
- How do you teach students to make responsible decisions when given the choice to choose their own group?
- How will you ensure that the instructional grouping arrangement and assigned tasks are appropriately rigorous for each member of the group?
- How will you leverage instructional grouping arrangements to promote student ownership in this lesson?

Teacher Content Knowledge

Indicator Overview

This indicator addresses the teacher's knowledge of the content she is teaching and her 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. When applying this indicator to a lesson, we recommend using NIET's Teacher Content Knowledge (TCK) Look-For Tools.

The Teacher Content Knowledge Look-For Tools are intended to help leaders better understand and support a teacher's content knowledge by suggesting what to look for during instruction. They are subject-specific and provide concrete "look-fors" that align with the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator's descriptors.

The look-fors provide suggestions of potential evidence; however, the lists in the tools are not exhaustive, and coaches should use their own context and understanding to consider other ways a teacher may demonstrate his or her content knowledge. School leaders and coaches can use this tool during walkthroughs or observations to identify evidence of a teacher's content knowledge in practice and provide feedback to strengthen and deepen student learning. It provides a developmental continuum for the observer to assess the teacher's content knowledge as demonstrated in practice. Coaches and teachers are also encouraged to discuss the evidence from walkthroughs, observations, and student work analysis in pre-and post-conference sessions and professional learning communities as appropriate.

Content and Curriculum Connections

High-quality curricular materials along with state academic standards provide teachers with a solid understanding of content. However, to thoroughly teach the content so that student learning experiences are meaningful and relevant, teachers may need to deepen their own understanding. Thoroughly reviewing all curricular materials and teaching resources such as those provided by the state department of education can help teachers develop an understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of the content; furthermore, collaborating with colleagues who teach like courses to share strategies for curricular implementation and effective instructional practices can result in more profound student learning across classrooms.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students communicate how the supports (e.g., graphic organizers) they use build their understanding of the objective.
- Students label their own thinking as they apply the lesson model to their own work.
- Students are not confused in too broad information but rather are clear about what the lesson objective is, how it is developed, and what they need to do to demonstrate mastery.

- Students make conceptual connections between concepts within the content and with concepts in other content.
- Students appropriately and independently use strategies that enhance and support their learning.
- Students understand the relevance of the content and recognize the information as applicable.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Content understanding	This refers to not just knowing the language of the standards but of a deeper understanding of: ● prerequisite skills needed to access grade-level content, ● learning progressions within each standard, ● relationships between and nuances within various aspects of content, curricular materials, and standards, and ● what student mastery at the highest level of rigor for the standard looks like.
Subject-specific instructional strategies	Subject-specific instructional strategies refer to how content knowledge is effectively taught and learned. Demonstrating above average performance on the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator includes not just knowing what the content is but how to teach it best.
Key concepts	Key concepts and ideas within the content are critical for foundational understanding and connect conceptually with other powerful ideas both within and beyond the content. In order for teachers to make these conceptual connections for students, they must have an expert understanding of standards, skills, and understandings within their own content, as well as awareness of big ideas in other content areas.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Teacher displays extensive content knowledge and understanding of both state standards and instructional materials, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach.	Teachers must not only have extensive content knowledge, but they must use their extensive content knowledge to create compelling learning experiences for their students. Some ways that teachers can display and use content knowledge include: ● using resources and activities that are aligned with the rigor of the standard(s) and objective(s); ● connecting the purpose of the lesson to each element of the lesson; ● sharing why and how the lesson objective(s) connect to everyday lives, future learning in the near term (tomorrow/next week), and long term (for the year) learning; and ● having students preview new learning in materials.	A teacher conducted a lesson on immigration in the 1860s and related immigration from the time period to the present day. News articles about immigrants and refugees were presented during class. Students selected someone they know who has immigrated to the United States to interview. Comparisons were made between immigrants of the 1860s and immigrants of today (reasons for immigrating, countries of origin, experiences). 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 highlighted key concepts and connected them to more powerful ideas.
Teacher consistently implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to	Teachers must know how to identify and implement specific instructional strategies that enhance student learning in a	Groups of students studied the circulatory and respiratory systems. During their study of how the two systems function and support each other, they also studied diseases of the two systems. The

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
enhance student content knowledge.	particular lesson and are aligned to the purpose of the lesson. Evidence of this descriptor can look like: ● teacher's focused presentation of content includes a model, examples, analogies, and visuals that best enhance students' content knowledge ● teacher's sequence of questions scaffolded to build student content knowledge ● the selection and implementation of specific activities and materials that support students' learning progression ● the integration of thinking and problem-solving throughout the lesson to intentionally develop students' ownership of content ● the intentional design of the student work product to illuminate student thinking	teacher had students utilize the information they have gained to develop plans for a healthy lifestyle, which could help prevent heart attacks, lung cancer, or other diseases. Students presented their plans to other students and to the school administration. They also used the plans to develop a healthy menu for the school cafeteria. By leading students to connect to these other ideas and concepts, a teacher provided evidence of her knowledge of the content being taught and ability to utilize a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to teach the content.
Teacher consistently highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas.	In order for students to learn for true, authentic understanding, teachers must expertly connect big ideas in the content to other powerful, relevant ideas. Some examples of how this can be achieved are: ● Teacher utilizes universal themes and generalizations to connect learning over multiple units and/or across disciplines, generating a deep, conceptual understanding for students ● Teacher connects lesson ideas to key concepts within a unit to help students transfer knowledge to other related concepts/ideas ● Teacher references and uses prompting questions about current events and ideas from today's culture to help students connect to learning	A sixth-grade teacher selected "change" as a universal theme for her classroom for the year. She reviewed standards across all subjects for the fall semester and determined that the generalization "change is necessary for growth" would best connect key ideas in the upcoming content and support learning for students. She added a section to her daily lesson plan template to remind herself to include a connection back to this generalization. At the beginning of the year, the teacher initiated the conversations and asked questions that connected learning to the generalization, but students began making the connection on their own and even doing so in ways the teacher hadn't anticipated. In literature lessons, students recognized that characters grew as a result of change that was both forced and chosen. In math lessons, students realized that they had to change/improve their computation strategies to become more efficient in order to handle more complicated problems. In studying ancient cultures in social studies, students found evidence to demonstrate that ancient peoples had to adjust their agricultural methods to survive various seasons. In science, students discovered that they had to be flexible when

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		designing robots and changing plans sometimes resulted in a better design. By connecting daily learning to the larger generalization, the teacher provided evidence of her knowledge of the content being taught and ability to connect learning to other powerful ideas.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you prepare yourself to teach (insert the specific topic taught)?
- How will you use the high-quality curricular materials available to you and your students?
- How will you develop or select appropriate instructional strategies to teach (insert the specific topic being taught)?
- How will you connect key concepts in the content being taught to more powerful ideas within the content and other disciplines?
- What are some other ideas to which you could have connected during the lesson?
- How will you ensure the content being learned in this lesson is appropriately rigorous for all learners?
- How can you leverage the content to promote student ownership?

Teacher Knowledge of Students

Indicator Overview

This indicator focuses on how well a teacher knows his students and their learning styles and interests. Therefore, it is closely connected to the indicator Motivating Students. Teachers should know how individuals and groups of students are best motivated and support each student as they progress toward mastery across the curriculum. A teacher's ability to organize the content in a manner that motivates and connects with students' interests and contexts is essential to supporting students in applying their learning. For content to be personally meaningful to students, there must be a communicated purpose for student learning. Students need to understand why the content or skill being taught is essential for them to master and how it is connected to the world outside of the classroom. Once a teacher plans to make learning personally meaningful and aligned to student background and interests, they can use their knowledge of student learning requirements to scaffold the learning for all students.

Additionally, differentiation of instructional methods and materials is needed to address academically diverse learners. Differentiated instructional methods and materials are not only needed to provide support for students to reach lesson objectives, but they are also needed to

ensure gifted students experience appropriately challenging learning. Successful application of this indicator to a lesson means that every student has a rigorous learning experience just right for them. General and special education teachers should also know how individual students who receive mild to moderate or gifted academic supports should best access the general or modified curriculum as well as other resources that address their learning and social-emotional needs. Teachers incorporate supports for diverse learners into the classroom to provide them with access to or extension of the curriculum and to ensure that all students are granted the opportunity to make progress towards lesson objectives.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Content and curriculum publishers often include recommendations for differentiated instruction to support all students' diverse learning needs. Curriculum resources include resources to provide intervention or remediation on various tiers of instruction and ideas on extending thinking around concepts and challenging students. Additionally, curriculum resources include ideas to support English learners with access to lessons to support language development. Teachers should analyze available student data and work to identify appropriate resources that can be incorporated into lessons so that all students receive appropriate supports. Planning for the use of these resources during instruction is essential. Curricular resources should also include connections to the cultural backgrounds and interests of students in each classroom. If these connections are not apparent or readily available, teachers need to seek supplemental resources that mirror the students' classroom composition.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students engage in lesson activities with varying supports in order to ensure all students can demonstrate mastery.
- Students connect with the learning and demonstrate a desire to engage with the content.
- Students persist in their work and rigorous learning.
- Students work respectfully with one another in a variety of grouping arrangements.
- Students learn with and from one another while engaged in collaborative group activities.
- Students who complete lesson activities early engage in high-quality instructional activities.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Anticipated learning abilities and challenges	Anticipated learning difficulties include obstacles that students might face in accessing the learning needed for lesson mastery that the teacher identifies and plans for before delivering the lesson.
Differentiated instructional content and strategies	Differentiated instructional methods refer to the design of lessons that include intentional supports and interventions to meet students' diverse academic learning needs. The teacher continually assesses student understanding to monitor progress and adjusts instruction per students' learning needs.
Interests, backgrounds,	In addition to ideas or concepts that spark curiosity and excitement, interests include what students like and care about. Backgrounds include the

and cultures	context of the students' home lives outside of school, how they forge familiar and friendly relationships, and what knowledge they carried before they entered courses or grade levels. Culture includes what students value in terms of their place in society and their ethnic and racial makeup.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning abilities and challenges.	Teachers design instruction to address students' needs. Before the lesson, teachers should consider how students might struggle to master the learning objective.	In a fourth-grade classroom, the lesson objective was for students to determine the meaning of figurative language (idioms) in a text. Each student had a written copy of the text, and some students also had an audio version available in their learning management system. In the past, students had struggled with the concept of figurative language and interpreted idioms too literally when they were assessed. The teacher used a section of the text to read aloud and model her thinking about making sense of idioms as they are used in the text. She had pre-planned scaffolded questions to ask during her model to assess whether they are building an accurate understanding continually. She completed her model and released students to work with partners or independently interpret idioms in the chapter they are reading. Before the lesson, the teacher identified two student groups who would need differentiated expectations. One group needed her to repeat the model in a small group and dissect the lesson's objective into parts (but did not change the objective). This also allowed those students to ask clarifying questions about the text. A second group worked on deepening their understanding of idioms by analyzing those same five idioms from the text and determining which other idiom could have been used instead without changing the meaning. The exit ticket for most students contained five idioms and the expectation was that students write an explanation for the idiom and how/why it was used in the chapter. The exit tickets for the students who required modifications to their work contained the same five idioms but with pictures added next to each one that illustrated the literal meaning. The expectation for both sets of exit tickets was the same: explain the idiom and how/why it was used in the chapter.
Teacher practices consistently incorporate student interests, backgrounds, and cultures.	Teachers connect the content being taught to the students' interests, backgrounds, and cultures so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students. This may mean enhancing the curriculum with additional resources and spoken narratives that connect students' existing schemas and the content they are learning.	
Teacher consistently provides differentiated instructional content and strategies to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.	Teachers can utilize alternative strategies to allow students to demonstrate mastery. Content is made more accessible by accommodating learning, visual, and auditory needs and making modifications to materials that allow for learning but do not remove students from the essential subject matter. Additionally, teachers should consider embedding opportunities that allow students to progress at different rates by offering extension activities or streamlined assignments. Instructional differentiation should not change the academic rigor of the learning objectives.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

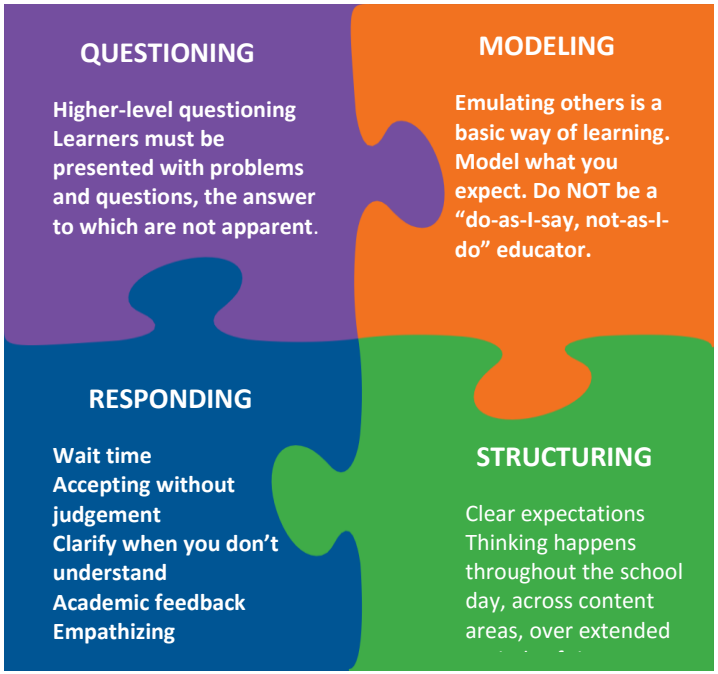
- What learning challenges do you anticipate for your students in this lesson? What type of support will your students need?
- How do you identify your students' interests, backgrounds, and cultures and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?
- How will you determine which students are ready for today's content, which need additional support, and which need additional challenge?
- How will you provide differentiated instruction to ensure every student is met where they are and taken to the next level of learning?
- How will you provide opportunities for all learners to have ownership of their learning in this lesson?

Thinking

Indicator Overview

Developing multiple skills in thinking and problem-solving enriches the learner's ability to manage complex tasks and higher levels of learning. While thinking is a process, problem-solving is the product of that thinking. By providing opportunities for students to practice many different approaches to solving problems as a result of their thinking processes, the teacher empowers the student with an important life skill. For students to apply the type of thinking and problem-solving referenced, the teacher must have taught the thinking and problem-solving types that students need to apply.

Research shows that there are four main ways that teachers can support students in their thinking and these are illustrated below:[1]



[1] A. Costa (Ed.), *Developing minds: A resource book for teaching thinking* (Rev. ed., Vol. 1). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

As you think about what research says about supporting student thinking, consider what indicators and/or descriptors are on the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric that align with these expectations. For example: "wait time" is in the Questioning indicator and "modeling" is in Presenting Instructional Content. By purposefully implementing the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric and reflecting upon the specific indicators that align with the research, teachers can effectively teach thinking.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Curriculum resources and materials provide teachers with activities, questions, and strategies to prompt student thinking and problem-solving related to the lesson content. Curriculum resources and materials may also feature learning activities to make

thinking visible such as graphic organizers or thinking maps. Teachers should plan how they will model thinking throughout a lesson and use the components of the curriculum to encourage one or more types of thinking.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students persevere through challenging tasks requiring the application of thinking models.
- Students support responses with relevant justification and reasoning.
- Students identify and discuss their individual progress toward mastery of the objective.
- Students choose appropriate strategies and tools to support their own thinking.
- Students are aware of multiple aspects of a topic and consider different points of view and perspectives to problems and solutions.
- Students are actively using success criteria and comparing it to their student work to check their progress toward mastery.
- Students are talking with their peers and/or their teachers about the thinking strategies they are using to solve problems and why those strategies are beneficial.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Thinking	Thinking refers to the metacognitive, the awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes; which is necessary to process and apply content knowledge.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Students are actively engaged in multiple types of thinking:		
● *analytical thinking*, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information;	When students are actively engaged in analytical thinking, they deeply examine specific aspects or parts of a content area topic or skill. 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: In language arts, a class read *Charlotte's Web*. The lesson began with a discussion of how readers can learn life lessons from different story characters. Through a Venn diagram, the class worked in small groups to compare and contrast Wilbur's personality traits with those of Charlotte. Next, the teacher asked the students to analyze the text and find specific words that provided evidence of the character traits the student listed. For the final part of this assignment, the teacher asked students to explain why Charlotte chose to help Wilbur and what each child would do if he or she were Charlotte. Example 2: Students studied a specific artist's work while working in pairs. They were asked to observe a painting and each identify one thing in the painting or element of the painting that could be removed that would not alter the artist's intent. Students discussed their choices and their responses with their partner and decided the best response to share with the whole class. Students were also asked to explain what the painting revealed about the artist's attitude toward life, war, nature, or other concepts.
● *practical thinking*, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios;	When students are actively engaged in practical thinking, they are applying content area skills and knowledge to their own lives. Students need to 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 expected to use and apply concepts and ideas that they learn.	A class engaged in a lesson on measurement. The teacher informed 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 plants and bushes to put in them. A group of students, fed up with the cafeteria food, decided to do something about it. First, they researched what the necessary requirements are for a healthy lunch. Next, they designed a menu for two weeks. Finally, they created 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 presented their

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		menu, shopping list, and pricing list to the school board. Their proposal was negotiated and some items on the menu changed.
● *creative thinking*, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and	When students are actively engaged in creative thinking, they are working toward developing new ideas and products connected to key content are concepts. 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.	The following are types of activities a teacher could present to her students that would showcase this descriptor: ● 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 their 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. ● Design a new football or basketball play for PE.
● *research-based thinking*, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.	When students are actively engaged in research-based thinking, they are examining information from multiple sources to solve a problem. 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.	The following are types of activities a teacher could present to her students that would showcase this descriptor: ● Students in a social studies class research six different professions and describe the benefits and pitfalls of each. ● Students in a science class research three sources of alternative energy and, based on their analysis of each, recommend the most fruitful source. ● Students in a social studies class examine staple foods from countries in three different continents, and describe why those foods are so pervasive. ● During a study of Jim Crow laws, students also conduct a study of Civil Rights laws. They then compare and contrast the different types of laws, debate the need for present laws to ensure all citizens have equal rights, and create the wording for these laws.
The teacher and/or students model metacognitive strategies.	Teachers and students make their thinking visible in the classroom when they model metacognitive strategies, opening their brains up for others to see the steps of their thinking process. Metacognitive models can support students	Example 1: During a high school English language arts lesson, students used a graphic organizer to analyze inferences of a poem and used the inferences to identify the theme of the poem. To support students' engagement in this analytical thinking, the teacher modeled his

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	in their own thinking processes.	thinking and completed the graphic organizer with a different poem than the students are using for their work. Students had the opportunity to discuss how they completed their assignment with one another according to the success criteria that they co-developed with the teacher at the start of the lesson. Example 2: Students in a 3rd grade math lesson worked in groups of three to solve real-world problems using multiplication. In a previous lesson, the teacher modeled different strategies to use to solve such problems. Each of the three students used a different strategy to solve the problem: array, number line, and drawing a picture model. Students discussed in their groups how they solved the problem using their assigned strategy and how each type of strategy helped them to do so.
Students are provided opportunities to:		
● generate a variety of ideas and alternatives;	Generating a variety of ideas and alternatives about a particular topic allows students to consider a topic in multiple ways, thereby leading to deeper understanding.	Example 1: Before a unit on deserts, students list all of the plants, animals, and attributes of a desert they can identify. Example 2: When solving a fraction problem, students generate different ways to solve the problem and different ways to represent their answers. Example 3: Students in a science class conduct experiments about which variables lead to maximum plant growth. One group tests different types of light, one tests different types of liquid, 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 what variables to test but also consider many alternative explanations.
● analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints; and	Providing opportunities for students to consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints gives them the thinking they need to learn how those different from themselves may view problems and solutions.	Example 1: A social studies class studies the Civil War by reading letters from soldiers from the North and South. Example 2: An art class studies predominant symbols in Western art and Eastern art and compares and contrasts the two art forms. Example 3: A physical education and math class work together to conduct a survey on children's favorite sports. Then, the students

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
		analyze 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 grades, gender, and race.
• 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.	Monitoring and analyzing one's thinking supports deeper engagement and academic performance. As students are aware of the learning strategies they are using and why, they will be able to more independently apply their learning in various situations and circumstances.	In a reading lesson, the teacher and her students discussed success criteria for when and how to pause during moments when students are reading to summarize. They then discussed why each of the criteria are important to being a good reader. The teacher metacognitively modeled her thinking to show students how to summarize. As she modeled, she said, "I've read a lot here. I better stop to summarize so I can remember and use what I am learning. I'm thinking about my success criteria and know I need to identify and use the main ideas from each paragraph I've read so far to summarize the passage." She then asked students to do the same summarization with a partner. Students reflected with their partner on when, how, and why they summarize and how the success criteria helped them to do so.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How can you model your thinking for students to support their connected thoughts to support their progress towards lesson mastery?
- How do you plan for activities and/or assignments that provide students with the opportunity to apply their thinking?
- How can you incorporate opportunities for students to apply analytical, creative, practical and research-based thinking?
- What metacognitive process will the activities and student work require of students?
- Where in the lesson will I release the thinking to the students? What do I expect to see and hear?

Problem-solving

Indicator Overview

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.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Curriculum resources and materials provide teachers with activities, questions, and strategies to prompt student thinking and problem-solving related to the lesson content. Teachers can utilize the student learning activities provided by the adopted curriculum and consider which require students to engage in and complete student work products that align to the various types of problem-solving.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students produce solutions to challenging tasks through engaging in a variety of thinking types.
- Students create clear representations of problems through the application of thinking.
- Students persist in deep engagement in solving problems demonstrating satisfaction when arriving at a solution.
- Students produce products that require thinking and understanding of a specific concept and objective.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Problem-solving	Problem-solving refers to the products developed as a result of applying a thinking process to a specific content-related task.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Students engage in activities that reinforce several of the following problem-solving types:		
● Abstraction	Abstract student thinking is the ability to understand concepts that are not tied to physical experiences. When provided with the opportunity to apply abstract thinking, students absorb information and make connections to larger general concepts. Students analyze multiple inputs to derive a common theme or conjecture by considering how the non-tangible concepts connect and form parts of a whole. When thoroughly teaching abstraction, teachers would model how to identify the core essence of a concept, phenomenon, or idea.	In an English language arts lesson, students read "Rumpelstiltskin", "Hansel and Gretel", and "Little Red Riding Hood". They then discussed in groups and wrote about the four qualities of the fairytales based on the common themes, concepts, and cross fairytale understanding. In a world history class, the unit focused on sourcing, situation, and how key sources should be contextualized within the perspective of the author, audience, and situational context. Students examined artifacts and determined common underlying themes to determine author and audience of key sources. Students reviewed the sources to determine common characteristics from the perspective of diverse authors.
● Categorization	Students analyze information, classify it, and sort it into meaningful categories. Implementing activities that prompt students to categorize allows	In math, students engaged in the study of polygons. They first defined the essential characteristics of polygons: closed, plane figure, straight sides, more than two sides, two-dimensional, and made of line segments. Next, they

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	students to analyze content and categorize new information to recall and draw upon in future experiences.	sorted different shapes into either polygon or non-polygon and explained their decision by justifying the categories using the language defined as essential characteristics of polygons.
● Drawing conclusions/justifying solutions	Students draw conclusions or inferences based on data presented to them in various forms, viewpoints, perspectives, and quality. There are three types of conclusions: ● A specific answer, idea, or opinion; ● A concept that can be derived from content; for example, a listing of ideas; and ● An objective look at the thinking that has been used. To justify solutions, students analyze several possible options, select the best solution, and tell or prove why that solution is best and the others are less adequate.	After reading about and discussing the events leading up to the Boston Tea Party, students wrote a paragraph expressing which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection. Then, they debated and decided which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection. Finally, they prepared a written summary with careful notes of all major points. Afterward, students wrote a reflective paragraph as to the process they went through in making their final decision.
● Predicting outcomes	To provide students with the opportunity to predict outcomes, students are presented with information or input and asked to make a hypothesis or educated guess. This product or activity is generally followed by students making observations, experimenting and then drawing conclusions or justifying their predications.	Students read *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 predicted and recorded in their reading journals some possible scenes that may unfold in the story and whether Montague will be successful.
● Observing and experimenting	Students observe, record/code, and measure. They make a hypothesis and then collect and analyze data in alignment with the hypothesis.	After a study of yearly weather patterns, students kept daily weather records for one month, noting the date, type of weather, temperature, and amount of precipitation. They created their own rain gauges to measure the precipitation. At the end of the month they determined the median and mean for temperature and precipitation. Using this data and their knowledge of yearly weather patterns, they hypothesized whether the medians and means for the next month would be the same, higher, or lower. At the end of the second month, students again analyzed their data, compared to the previous month, and either confirmed or refuted their hypotheses.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
● Improving solutions	Students are given a solution to a problem and asked to suggest methods to improve it or make it better.	Students have read a series of Nate the Great mysteries. They discussed weak and strong endings. Pairs of students chose one to reread together that theyfelt had a weak ending. Together they rewrote the ending to give a better explanation that solved the mystery. Students studying World War II chose a specific battle and developed ways it could have been more effectively planned by the losing side to change the outcome.
● Identifying relevant/irrelevant Information	Students are given relevant and irrelevant information needed to solve a problem. They are asked to identify the relevant information and use that information to solve the problem.	Students re-read the fairytale Goldilocks. They were asked to fill in a T-chart with information from the story that was relevant and irrelevant to whether or not Goldilocks is a criminal and should be arrested. Finally, they used the T-chart information to render a verdict and explain it in writing. When solving word problems in math, students identified and labeled information that is necessary and unnecessary to use in solving the problem.
● Generating ideas	Students are presented with a problem and then brainstorm lists of ideas and viable solutions to the problem.	When solving a fraction problem, a math teacher asked students to generate different ways to solve the problem and different ways to represent their answers. Some students drew pictures, some wrote sentences to explain their thinking, while others used algorithms to show their work. This provided the opportunity for students to generate alternatives.
● Creating and designing	Students develop a new and unique product that other students can solve or evaluate.	Students read The Legend of Jimmy Spoon by Kristina Gregory. Since this book lacks a map, students created one showing the locations Jimmy visited with his adopted Shoshone tribe. They began with a generic map, which includes Utah, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, to trace Jimmy's travels throughout the book. Students created tutorials in PowerPoint to teach younger students' basic information about the continents. Presentations were at their partner's reading level and included a mini quiz at the end. Students in a physical education class were given selected equipment such as a mat, a base, a rope, and a scooter. They worked in small group teams to design a method for getting all of the equipment and all of themselves from one side of the gym to the other without their bodies physically touching the gym floor.

Suggested Coaching Questions:

- What are the student work activities and products that students will engage in during a lesson?
- What types of problem-solving do these student work products require? What types of thinking do these student work activities and products require?
- How will students be actively engaged in the problem-solving products in the lesson?
- How can your lessons provide for a variety of types of problem-solving tasks?

The Link between Thinking and Problem-solving:

The indicators Thinking and Problem-solving are closely connected to each other. In fact, effective problem-solving is impossible without the proper thinking skill behind it. One simple way to remember this is that thinking is the process and problem-solving is the product. Analytical thinking is one of the thinking processes that is needed to effectively categorize. For example, students would need to know how to compare and contrast (one type of analytical thinking) in order to create a Venn diagram (classify and sort into categories). The strong link between these two indicators has a profound effect on teachers and students. When reflecting on a lesson, identify what a student produced throughout the lesson. These products will guide you to the types of problem-solving a student engaged in during the lesson. Then, think what type of thinking the students engaged in to create the product(s). This will help you determine the types of thinking utilized in the lesson.

DESIGNING AND PLANNING DOMAIN

Instructional Plans

Indicator Overview

Instructional plans contribute to effective and efficient learning experiences for students and, in turn, highly engaged classrooms. Instructional plans are based heavily on state standards, available local curriculum resources and materials, and analysis of formative and summative student assessments. Therefore, teachers should incorporate standards, curriculum resources, and assessments into their daily, weekly, and unit instructional planning. This indicator is tightly connected to multiple other indicators across rubric domains. Effective teachers begin planning with the end in mind and develop the lesson objective, which creates a connection to the Standards and Objectives indicator. Then, they plan for how students will demonstrate mastery of the objective, connected to Student Work and Assessment. Finally, they plan the activities and materials to lead students toward success.

Evaluating Lesson Plans

Administrators and teacher leaders should select a system or protocol that provides feedback to teachers on individual lesson plans regularly. 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 this indicator's specific descriptors, administrators and teacher leaders can more narrowly focus their analysis of teachers' lesson plans. Specific feedback can then be provided to teachers.

When evaluating lesson plans, it is best practice to use the lesson plan as a guide for assessing instruction without assigning a score for the instructional plans indicator before observing the lesson in action. An exemplary written lesson plan does not always predict a proficient lesson, just as a lesson plan that leaves the observer wondering what will happen in a lesson does not always predict below proficient lesson delivery. Instructional plans must be scored only after the lesson has been delivered and the observer categorizes evidence in all domains. In order to determine the quality of a teacher's plan, it is important to see the impact the planning has on teacher's ability to deliver the lesson.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Effective instructional plans are the foundation of impactful teaching and learning and should align with state standards and incorporate curriculum resources adopted by the school or district. If a district or school requires scripted lessons from a core curriculum, teachers may still need to adjust to meet their students' individual and group needs. Even high-quality curricular materials should be previewed and adjusted to meet students' needs. Teachers are expected to use their knowledge of students to make these adjustments when planning lessons. These minor modifications can be made by annotating the scripted lessons to:

- highlight/emphasize key ideas
- use specific provided examples as a model to address a common student need
- add scaffolded questions to build background knowledge and connect to prior learning experiences
- omit/skip activities that are unnecessary for this particular lesson
- connect to other curricular materials
- denote student groupings specific for the lesson content
- list students who may need additional supports as well as those who need enrichment

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students demonstrate an understanding of the lesson objectives and the connection to the state standards.
- Students authentically engage in the lesson's activities.
- Students make connections between their background knowledge and the lesson's activities and materials.
- Students understand how the new learning builds on prior student knowledge and is integrated with other disciplines.
- Students demonstrate autonomy and ownership by making meaningful and relevant choices regarding their learning.
- Students reflect on their progress toward mastery, the learning objective, and success criteria.
- Students complete assigned activities and assessments.

Key Terms in the Rubric and Handbook	
Curriculum	Refers to a set of lessons that teachers deliver to meet identified learning targets and the texts, materials, content, and other resources that support the learning experience. A high-quality curriculum includes high expectations for students, demonstrates alignment with state standards, and is highly rigorous.
Relevant	Instructional plans include activities and materials that students can identify or recognize as familiar ideas.
Integrate	Planning for meaningful and connected learning experiences across content areas.
Student Work	Measurable products that are the result of standards-based learning activities and make student thinking and learning visible.
Reflection	Allowing students to think about the learning that they accomplish in any given lesson or day of instruction.
Closure	Time at the end of a segment of learning to review what has been learned within the instruction segment.
Annotated	Taking notes to enhance or draw attention to critical components of the curriculum during instructional planning.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Instructional Plans include:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence Evidence should be collected from the lesson plan and from the lesson observation. *Please note: Evidence for this indicator will vary based on the standards and requirements from the state/district.*
measurable and explicit objectives aligned to state standards and curriculum, both in content and in rigor;	Teachers use the standards-aligned scope and sequence provided in the curriculum to develop monthly, weekly, and daily lesson plans. When lesson plans are provided as part of the curriculum or instructional materials adopted by the district or school, teachers may annotate a curriculum guide to cue specific actions, plan questions, and enhance the instruction. Daily lesson plans should contain an explicit objective that clearly states what students should know, understand, or be able to do by the end of the lesson. This clarity provides teachers a destination for the lesson, allowing them to design a road map of activities that directly leads to achieving that objective.	<u>Sample evidence from the lesson plan:</u> 3rd grade ELA lesson plan: The teacher clearly labels the both the state standard and lesson learning objective in the instructional plan: • Standard RL. 3: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of the text. • Objective: I can answer questions about information text, justify my answer by referencing the text, andprovide textual evidence and create my own biographical question. Review evidence captured and categorized from the lesson observation that applies to finalize ratings.
activities, materials, and assessments that: ● are aligned to state standards; content, including curriculum; and success criteria; ● are sequenced and scaffolded based on student need; ● build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines as appropriate; and ● provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson closure;	Instructional plans should be aligned to the standard and address how the teacher plans to design the lesson delivery to model performance expectations and provide time for students to practice and explore the new learning concept through rigorous activities scaffolded to build on student strengths and needs. Instructional plans should be written with attention to how students can connect their background knowledge and the content instruction. To ensure that students are at the center of the daily instructional plan, teachers should plan for aligned student work that includes time for students to reflect on their learning.	<u>Sample evidence from the lesson plan:</u> • Plan includes success criteria – provided to students using an exemplar • Lesson plan includes a hook: student-led model "Stump Me" demonstrates how to select a question and answer using text features and evidence • Paired grouping opportunities - anchor charts (with guiding questions connected to success criteria) • Students will work in pairs to allow them to practice these skills and for the teacher to provide formative assessment. • The worksheet provides independent assessment for the teacher. • Star/Stair: Reflection activity at the end of the lesson Review evidence captured and categorized from the lesson observation that applies to finalize ratings.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Instructional Plans include:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence Evidence should be collected from the lesson plan and from the lesson observation. *Please note: Evidence for this indicator will vary based on the standards and requirements from the state/district.*
evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners	Instructional plans should address how the teacher will motivate students to engage in the content learning; this is accomplished by knowing one's students and planning to meet students at the center of the instruction.	<u>Sample evidence from the lesson plan:</u> • Game-like activities included • Paired groupings Review evidence captured and categorized from the lesson observation that applies to finalize ratings.
evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs and student choice	Instructional plans should explicitly outline how a teacher will provide intentional differentiated instruction to meet student's diverse needs and ensure equity of access to grade-level standards. This can be observed through rich and engaging activities that include meaningful opportunities to apply new learning and facilitate student choice regarding their learning.	<u>Sample evidence from the lesson plan:</u> • Knowledge organizer, anchor charts, and choice board included in lesson plan Review evidence captured and categorized from the lesson observation that applies to finalize ratings.
strategies for student autonomy and ownership	Instructional plans should clearly label how a teacher will provide intentional and purposeful structures that facilitate student autonomy and ownership throughout a lesson.	<u>Sample evidence from the lesson plan:</u> • Success criteria and guiding questions included to guide student thinking • Bounce cards used in paired groupings (sentence stems) Review evidence captured and categorized from the lesson observation that applies to finalize ratings.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- What annotations do you need to make in your curriculum guides to support mastery for your students?
- What do you want your students to be able to do as a result of your teaching?
- How will students show/demonstrate what they have learned?
- How will you set student-centered goals that are aligned to the state standards?

- What student engagement strategies will work best with the lesson you are planning?
- How will you ensure that all activities, materials, and assessments are aligned to the lesson learning objective, are age appropriate, and pique the interests of most learners?
- How will you intentionally plan to incorporate opportunities to accommodate individual student learning needs?
- How will students have autonomy and ownership of their learning?
- How will you provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson closure?

Student Work

Indicator Overview

Effective planning for instruction requires consideration of the content-specific work and assignments students will complete during the lesson. To ensure challenge and rigor, student work assignments should be aligned to state standards and utilize high-quality curriculum materials. The work that teachers plan for students to produce in a lesson should provide opportunities to engage in multiple types of problem-solving and therefore multiple types of thinking as a result. Teachers also identify and plan for ways that they will analyze the work students produce and then use what they learn from their analysis to make future instructional decisions.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Designing and planning for strong student work requires ensuring that assignments are aligned to content-area standards and utilize high-quality curriculum materials. Teachers can identify student work assignments in adopted curriculum materials that require multiple types of thinking and problem-solving and provide opportunities to connect their learning to other aspects of their lives. If a district or school has adopted a high-quality curriculum, teachers may still need to adjust student work assignments to meet their students' individual and group needs as they progress toward mastery of the standards.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students engage in producing work assignments that are challenging and require a variety of thinking types.
- Student work assignments prompt deep thinking beyond simple recall or reproduction.
- Students write about their content-area thinking.
- Student work assignments provide opportunities for students to make connections to their own lives.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Student Work	Measurable products that are the result of standards-based learning activities and make student thinking and learning visible.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Assignments are always aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards and curriculum content.	Student work that is aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards and curriculum content provides a clear understanding of student learning. Impactful student work is intentionally planned for and implemented with students at the center of the work. When analyzing the products students are engaged in producing, there is evidence of a clear link to the content area and grade-level standards. Student work products require challenging and rigorous thinking about content-area topics.	In a 6th grade ELA classroom, the focus standard posted is RL. 6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone. To ensure students are provided learning experiences at the depth and rigor of the standard the teacher plans for a unit of student that builds on student understanding from basic to complex. Some of the activities that the teacher planned for students include defining and applying the concepts of figurative and connotative meanings. Students found words and phrases in known texts and determined why the selected words and phrases were figurative or connotative language and justified their thinking to a partner.
Assignments are always aligned to the lesson's objective and include descriptions of how assessment results will inform future instruction.	Student work is aligned to lesson objectives and should support teachers to determine whether students met mastery of the objective at the level of the rigor of the standard. Assignments should be a part of a logical continuum of learning and provide both student and teacher with clear direction and how subsequent lessons will build upon an individual day's lesson.	In a subsequent lesson tied to the same unit of study, the students continued to use their selected words and phrases to analyze the impact of word choice and tone. Students worked through the analysis of the impact of word choice and tone and were able to clearly identify and label the difference between figurative and connotative meaning; however, they were unable to determine the impact of word choice and tone. The teacher planned a new lesson to provide clarity around how to analyze figurative and connotative language and the impact of word choice and tone. To ensure that students were engaged and could internalize the concept of word choice and tone, the teacher used two previously read texts; a contemporary novel and a mystery novel. Students were familiar with both texts and had read them during previous units of study. The teacher used the known texts to reiterate the concept of how word choice and tone impact the message of the literature.
Students organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it.	Student work assignments prompt students toward responses that require deeper thinking versus just copying, guessing, or reproducing information that has been given to them. Students are provided opportunities to persevere through assignments that are scaffolded and connected to build deep content learning.	
Students draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing	Student work assignments prompt students to consider multiple pieces of information as they think deeply about content area topics. Their work	Students were asked to use figurative language to explain and summarize five of their most memorable experiences that they have had in their life. Students were provided inspiration by first brainstorming their memorable experiences and then by brainstorming the most unique figurative language they had

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	results in content and grade-level specific writing that makes their thinking visible.	identified and discussed during their unit of study. Students wrote and animated their most memorable moments essays with the use of figurative language. In a subsequent lesson, students shared their essays with a peer who was to identify the figurative language used, generalize the connotative meaning, and justify why their peers had chosen the language to include in their most memorable moments essay.
Students connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives, both inside and outside of school.	Student work assignments provide opportunities for students to consider ways content-area topics connect to their own personal experiences, thereby adding deeper meaning and engagement to their learning experiences.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How will you design opportunities for students to produce work that is aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards?
- How can you use available curriculum materials to ensure student work assignments are aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards?
- How will you plan to engage student thinking in organizing, interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information rather than reproducing work?
- How will you encourage students to engage in high-quality problem-solving so that they can draw conclusions, generalize, and produce arguments through extended writing assignments?
- How will you create opportunities for students to connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations in their daily lives?
- How will you design student work that encourages students to think beyond learning in the classroom?

Assessment

Indicator Overview

Effective assessment is a fundamental part of instruction and learning. The goal of this section is to provide examples of high-quality assessments and how they should be utilized. An effective assessment plan answers the questions:

- What do I want my students to be able to do as a result of my teaching?
- 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.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Assessments should align to or be directly taken from the adopted high-quality curriculum. If high-quality curriculum is not available, teachers must pay attention to the scope and sequence of the content and the rigor of the standard in order to assess student learning effectively. Both classroom-level and school-level assessment data help teachers select the subsequent standard and supporting curriculum and materials to use in daily lessons, interventions, and tutoring. Formative assessment data is generated during the lesson.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students know what they are learning and how they will be assessed.
- Students self-monitor and engage in learning through metacognitive processes.
- Students take ownership of their learning and self-assess based on clear measurement criteria.
- Students reference clear measurement criteria throughout the lesson.
- Students ask themselves questions to process their learning and check for their understanding.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Alignment	The assessments, the objective, the content, and state standards are building and measuring the same skill.
State standards	State standards reflect the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn in a given content area in that state. These standards set clear benchmarks for learning and provide guidance to teachers as they develop learning experiences and lessons.
Instructional decisions	A systematic approach of using student achievement and other data to make choices regarding instruction during planning and lesson delivery.
Measurement criteria	Measurement criteria define what success looks and sounds like and how it should be assessed; it defines student mastery.
Methods of measuring student progress	Practices that help teachers use student performance data and student work to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, make informed instructional decisions, and identify which students need interventions.
Formative assessment	Formative assessment refers to tools, activities, and assessments that identify misconceptions, struggles, and learning gaps during the lesson and are used to assess how to address any identified needs. Some examples of formative assessment are classroom polls, exit tickets, the use of whiteboards to view student understanding, a draft version of a project or paper, or turn and talk with peers.
Summative assessment	Summative assessments evaluate how much a student has learned after a lesson, unit, or benchmarking period. Some examples of summative assessments are formal exams, end-of-unit or chapter questions, a final project or paper, or statewide tests.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Assessments:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
are aligned with the depth and rigor of the state standards and content,	Assessments should be directly connected to the activity and new learning by students. Therefore,	The teacher developed assessment items that students engaged in periodically thoughout the lesson for students to engage in. The first

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Assessments:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
including curriculum resources	assessments need to be aligned to the state standards, taken from adopted high-quality curricula (when available), and aligned to the lesson objective as evidenced in the instructional plan	question was asked of students 15 minutes into the lesson and assessed a sub-objective necessary for continued learning. This process was repeated two more times in the lesson. The last assessment of the lesson, taken from the provided curriculum, assessed the learning at the highest level of the standard and the lesson objective to determine student mastery of the lesson learning.
are designed to provide feedback on progress against objectives	Assessment plans must address how the teacher will collect data and information before, during, and after the lesson to monitor student progress toward the lesson objective. This can be accomplished through formal checks for understanding, which includes preplanned moments during key points of each lesson.	During a lesson on proper nouns, the teacher listened to students sort through word cards to find the proper nouns to measure student progress. The teacher provided academic feedback and questions to students who were sorting incorrectly. He reminded the entire class to use the anchor chart to guide their thinking. As the students transitioned to writing sentences with proper nouns, the teacher modeled writing sentences and checking the work using the anchor chart. He then had the students write their sentences on sentence strips and hang them on the wall for peer review. He approved each sentence before it was hung as an additional check for student progress.
use a variety of question types and formats to gauge student learning and problem-solving	Assessment plans must include planning for the types of prompting questions teachers will use to gauge student learning and problem-solving. Planning for a variety of questions could support periodic checks for understanding throughout the lesson. Student understanding may be observable through teacher questions or feedback the teacher provides to students during instruction.	
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)	The inclusion of formative and summative assessments in instructional plans provides teachers with the ability to track progress both during and after the lesson. These student performance measures should be written in the instructional plans and include a variety of types of assessment to measure the impact of the lesson on student learning.	A class of first grade students was working on sight words to share and write ideas about a topic of the sight word. Throughout the lesson, the teacher planed for various checks for understanding through formative assessment. She had the class review the words together and read the words out loud to each other using a student selector app. Every student was asked to read one word. The teacher then shared pictures that illustrated each sight word and had students work in trios to sort the pictures to the words that match that idea. The teacher supported each group until they all make correct matches. The class then worked together to complete sentences using the words. Lastly, the teacher had each student write their own sentence using the words and modeled this for them.
require extended written tasks as appropriate	Extended written tasks prompt students to extend their thinking and put it in writing.	
include clear illustrations of student	A clear illustration of student progress may look	

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***Assessments:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
progress toward state standards, which students monitor, understand, and articulate; and	like student samples that depict performance levels aligned to the lesson success criteria.	The teacher moved around the room, providing feedback to students who are struggling. The teacher collected the student sentences at the end of the lesson. A summative assessment of sight words is given to students when they are asked to read and write sight words at the end of each quarter.
include descriptions of how assessment results will be used by teachers and students to inform future instruction and learning	If available, the assessment design should be informed by the student pre-assessment data or baseline data depending on the content area and level. This data will inform next instructional steps for the students and the teacher.	The teacher gave the art class a chart as a warm-up activity that served as student baseline data. She asked students to identify in the first two columns what they know and want to know about shadowing an objective to show perspective. The teacher then used this information to group students, placing those who knew more about shadowing together and grouping students who wrote very little or incorrect information for additional review and modeling. She knew that this skill is a cornerstone for upcoming lessons and that students need to be proficient before she moves on with the unit.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How will you know the students learned what you taught?
- How will you develop clear measurement criteria aligned to the state standards?
- How will students demonstrate mastery through multiple measures (e.g., project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice test)?
    - How will you use assessment to accommodate the needs of individual students?
    - How will you check for understanding during the lesson? At the conclusion of the lesson?
- How will you ensure that students understand how they are doing and support students' self-awareness?

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Expectations

Indicator Overview

The descriptors under this indicator directly connect to descriptors in the Instruction domain. In order to fully exceed expectations for the descriptors under Expectations, teachers should have a deep knowledge of the students they are teaching, as well as deep knowledge of standards and content, in order to ensure that clear and rigorous academic expectations are established.. Additionally, students should be taking a visible and active role in leveraging both expectations established by the teacher and by themselves as they are learning. Differentiated instructional methods that are rigorous, appropriate 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.

In order for a teacher to fully exceed expectations for this indicator, students will feel safe enough to describe not only what they learned or did not learn, but also their metacognition or thinking. When a teacher regularly reinforces and rewards student's efforts in self-monitoring their own learning, students can reflect on their own learning and/or provide academic feedback to one another, thereby motivating the students to learn from their mistakes. Additionally, a teacher will ensure that lesson structure and pacing is optimized for all students to progress at different learning rates to ensure that each student meets their learning goals based on the established criteria.

Content and Curriculum Connections

When a teacher sets clear and rigorous academic expectations that are aligned to grade-appropriate standards and objectives for every student, she is also able to fully understand how activities and materials found in high-quality curricula ensure equitable access to learning. Additionally, a teacher establishes specific student-friendly criteria, which outlines what mastery for learning looks and sounds like, and utilizes that criteria as a foundation to establish clear expectations for learning. For a teacher to fully exceed expectations, not only is the teacher utilizing the criteria, but students are also utilizing the criteria and taking an active role in guiding expectations for themselves. When students understand the success criteria for the expected learning, they are more likely to engage in the curriculum and master the content.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students are encouraged to self-monitor their learning based on clearly established success criteria for the lesson.
- Students can articulate where they are in the progress of learning and know what is needed to experience success.
- Students are not afraid to make mistakes and see the mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Students know that they were successful during the lesson when accomplishing the lesson's objective.

- Students experience success because the lesson was differentiated for specific needs.
- Students do not give up easily and strive to complete their work.
- Students do not feel rushed in the lesson and have opportunities to develop their understanding

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Rigorous academic expectations	Teacher communicates success/measurement criteria to set academic expectations for the lesson. Rigor of the objective and criteria is aligned to curriculum as well as the grade-level standard. Students can refer to these expectations to self-assess and monitor mastery of the intended objective.
Describe thinking	Students are able to refer to success criteria and provide the metacognition needed to complete the intended task. Students can communicate their strengths and weaknesses as well as strategies needed to be successful.
Initiative	Teacher established and taught processes that students can follow with little to no teacher direction throughout the lesson. Students refer to success criteria to self-monitor learning as the lesson progresses.
Optimizes	Teacher activities are differentiated and allow for students to progress at different learning rates. Pacing is efficient and effective for all learners. This planning and implementation allows for equitable access for all learners.
Learning goals	Students know daily goals and can articulate progression of these goals using success criteria.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Teacher engages students in learning with clear and rigorous academic expectations and actively uses aligned and differentiated materials and resources to ensure equitable access to learning.	Teacher and/or student-generated success criteria is developed for lessons, and the teacher utilizes materials such as the diverse learners' guides and intervention lessons from standards-aligned curriculum.	During the math block in a 3rd grade classroom, the teacher set up math stations aligned to the daily objective. Academic expectations were visible on the success criteria anchor chart. Teacher modeled new learning while tagging expectations on the anchor chart. All students completed the problem of the day, which was a word problem based on equal parts. The teacher provided numbers that were slightly easier for students who were struggling and numbers that were challenging for students who are ready for a challenge. All students solved the problem and justified their solutions in writing. The teacher circulated as students worked through their problem using their own strategy. One student was struggling with the concept of equal parts, and the teacher asked probing questions to support the use of the strategy and to inspire success. The teacher thanked the student for persevering and asked the student how the new approach to applying the strategy was different from the first attempt and how she would use it in the future. Teacher asked the student if she would be comfortable
Students regularly learn from their mistakes and can describe their thinking on what they learned.	Students self-assess work using success criteria, identify mistakes, self-correct, explain change in thinking, and identify miscues.	
Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students consistently experience success.	The teacher's pacing is brisk and provides varied opportunities for students to engage in the gradual release of responsibility based on their identified needs. Students who need models receive explicit models; students who are able to start at the we do/I do stage engage in that component of the gradual release model. Based on students' self-assessment during the	

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	activities, students have access to materials that further extend or clarify learning in order to fully understand if their own learning is progressing.	sharing her second attempt in front of the class and to share what she learned through the process. Example student-to-student conversation: "It's ok if you don't get it right the first time … The process you will use is … I'll share how I came up with that answer." The learning and behavior expectations were clear in the classroom, and there were anchor charts that depicted what students should do when they finished their work. Upon completion of the problem of the day, the students had a menu of aligned activities to choose from as they worked independently. The teacher called three separate small groups for specific mini-lessons at the teacher-led table. All students worked independently and followed the anchor chart when they were unsure what to do next. Teacher began the lesson with whole group instruction and cognitively guided math inquiry through the problem of the day. Students had a clear differentiated menu of aligned activities to work on individually, with a partner or in a group while the teacher addressed student needs through small group instruction. Students utilized the success criteria to self-assess their progress in learning and make corrections or ask questions. "How can I make this work better? What questions should I be asking myself as I'm engaged in this activity in order to learn?" Reflection questions and journals are used by students to assess their success in a lesson and progression toward learning goals.
Students lead opportunities that support learning.	Students are using success criteria aligned to lesson's objective as they engage in a variety of materials. Students are able to support learning through goal setting aligned to success criteria.	
Students take initiative to meet or exceed teacher expectations.	The teacher encourages students to track progress and set goals for individual mastery of the lesson's objectives. Students are able to persevere through the learning process by referring to success criteria and aligned strategies given.	
Teacher optimizes instructional time to ensure each student meets their learning goals.	The teacher sets up experiences where students have opportunities to engage in enrichment (e.g., centers are in place with materials that align to the curriculum that support and extend student learning) or remediation activities (small group instruction, one-on-one, intervention) that support identified student needs and/or student level of understanding of assigned goals and expectations.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you ensure that academic expectations for students are clear and rigorous? How are the academic expectations aligned to the grade-level standards?
- What is the success criteria for learning? How are both the teacher and the students utilizing the criteria to monitor learning throughout the lesson? What adjustments are being made to ensure students have the opportunity to reach success? What feedback are students providing to one another? How are students making their thinking process visible?

- Why is it important for students to have opportunities to learn from their mistakes? How are students working through their own mistakes and adjusting their learning?
- How will you ensure that all students experience success with the lesson?
- In the lesson, how will students take initiative and persevere with their own work?
- In this lesson, how will students engage in goal setting?
- How will you plan for activities that will optimize time for progression toward goals?

Engaging Students and Managing Behavior

Indicator Overview

Timely and effective management of both student behavior and student engagement is critical for effective instruction and student learning to take place within a classroom. The descriptors under this indicator also directly connect to descriptors in the Instruction domain.
In order for a teacher to fully exceed expectations for the descriptors under this indicator, it is evident that the teacher has established a culture where students understand how their own actions in the classroom help or hinder learning. Students are self-aware of the connection between their behaviors and their learning, spend time successfully completing assignments, and are engaged either independently or collaboratively with other students. For a teacher to manage student behavior effectively, he must establish clear expectations for learning as well as the behaviors associated with success. The teacher should model both academic expectations and behavioral expectations by providing examples and non-examples when presenting instructional content.

Content and Curriculum Connections

Managing student behavior is critical to keeping the focus in the classroom during lessons on the instruction. Many curriculums include routines and structures embedded in multiple lessons to help build common structures for learning for students, but it is critical that teachers establish expectations for appropriate behavior and reinforce those expectations to minimize the loss of important instructional time for students.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students, in partnership with the teacher, determine the class expectations/rules for appropriate learning behavior.
- Students self-monitor their own behavior based upon clear class learning expectations/rules.
- Students have several coping strategies to use when frustrated and feel comfortable using these in the classroom.
- Students are actively displaying norms through their actions.
- Students provide positive feedback to one another.
- Students remind one another when off task and quickly return to the task at hand.

- Students support one another's learning by reminding each other of the collective expectations.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Optimize	When students are engaged in optimized learning, they are engaged in the most effective learning strategies possible. While there may be many other strategies or choices that are applicable, the most efficient and effective strategyfor student learning must be planned for.
Contingent Activities	Contingent activities are high interest,engagement activities that are meant to be encourage students, reinforce expected behaviors, and contribute to a positive classroom environment.
Positive reinforcement	Positive reinforcement includes praising students for positive behaviors to encourage and reinforce ideal classroom behavior and interaction.
Inconsequential behavior	Inconsequential behaviors are those that may be bothersome to a teacher but do not disrupt the classroom environment.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Students are consistently engaged in behaviors that optimize learning and increase time on task.	Students should always be engaged in learning. There should be no down time. By planning for consistent engagement and increased time on task, students have minimal time to engage in off task behaviors. The teacher must model explicit expectations for students and have highly engaging, rigorous, and relevant learning opportunities. This indicator is closely related to Presenting Instructional Content and Activities and Materials.	Student conversations are consistently focused on the lesson's objective, reference materials, and refrain from sidebar or off task behaviors. Students are self-paced in learning, utilizing a checklist or choice board to complete tasks. The students meet with the teacher to get feedback when needed. The students and the teacher utilize criteria to self-assess learning and guide feedback sessions. Students utilize the norms that have been established. The students and the teacher provide positive feedback to one another.
Teacher consistently uses and students reinforce several techniques (e.g., rewards, approval, contingent activities, consequences, etc.) that maintain student engagement and promote a positive classroom environment.	Exemplary teachers understand that they must do more than just engage students every once and a while. Creating opportunities where students stay engaged can be challenging. This is why using a variety of techniques and allowing student ownership in those techniques is vital to the success of classroom environments. Rewards must be thoughtfully planned out and teachers must follow through with the plans they communicate to students.	Students and the teacher provide positive feedback to one another. Teacher has a reward system or incentive in place (eagle bucks, dove dots, etc.). When providing incentives, the teacher connects the incentive with the appropriate behavior.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	Students must be active participants and have some level of choice in setting up reward systems or contingent activities. The outcome must be meaningful to students so they commit to changing or increasing the expected behavior. Not only must the behaviors be explicitly communicated, the positive and negative consequences must also be communicated so students are fully aware of what is at stake. This practice also allows the teacher the opportunity to increase the use of praise with his students.	
Teacher and students establish collective commitments for learning and behavior.	When the teacher includes the students in the process of establishing the commitments for learning and behavior, it communicates to students that their thoughts and voices are valued. Ownership of the agreed upon learning commitments increases students' follow through with the expected behaviors. Student involvement also creates a more detailed understanding of the expectations, increasing comprehension and leaving less room for confusion. They become active participants, brainstorming and using critical thinking skills in the process.	Rules, norms, and behavior expectations are created and agreed on by both students and teachers. Students support each other's learning by reminding each other of the agreed-upon rules. Evidence that routines, procedures, and/or success criteria are developed by students with the assistance of the teacher. The teacher often provides exemplars, examples, and non-examples to students for them to identify and develop lesson criteria and appropriate classroom behaviors.
Teacher consistently recognizes and motivates positive behaviors and does not allow inconsequential behavior to interrupt the lesson.	Teachers make hundreds of decisions a day and deciding which behaviors to address and which behaviors to overlook is a choice. Personal preference should not be the deciding factor. Teachers should consider the overall impact of addressing the behavior on the class. If the behavior is bothersome to the teacher but is not having a direct impact on the lesson or students, it should be addressed individually later on.	Teacher has a reward system or incentive in place (eagle bucks, dove dots, etc.). When providing incentives, the teacher connects the incentive with the appropriate behavior. Teacher places names of students who are exhibiting first-class behavior that builds the self-esteem of classmates on a celebration chart.
The teacher addresses individual students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class.	When inappropriate behavior that is damaging to the learning environment occurs, it is important that it is addressed. Rather than addressing the student in front of the entire class, which some students may perceive as embarrassing and further act out, the teacher should address the student in private.	When students are working on assigned tasks and constructive noise ensues, the teacher does not stop the class or interrupt the work of the student to address the behavior.
The teacher quickly attends to	When a disruption occurs that requires attention, the teacher must	Students who are off task are reminded by the teacher or

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
disruptions with minimal interruption to learning.	be able to address it without causing a major impact on the learning that was taking place. This includes addressing it effectively with minimal time being taken from the instructional needs of students.	other students, and they quickly return to the task at hand.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- What strategies do you implement to encourage students to behave and stay on task during the lesson? How do you involve you students in this process?
- How do you and your students collectively establish class expectations, such as norms, contracts, and rules, to ensure learning is valued?
- What are some techniques you and your students use to maintain appropriate individual and group behavior?
- What types of behavior do you deem inconsequential and often overlook?
- How do you address specific students while not punishing the entire class?
- Why is it important to attend to interruptions and firmly while teaching a lesson? How can this impact the learning of others?

Environment

Indicator Overview

Classroom environment is an important factor that affects student learning. Therefore, the descriptors for this indicator are very connected to Instruction. Additionally, this indicator is closely interconnected to the other indicators in the Environment domain such as Expectations, Engaging Students and Managing Behavior, and Respectful Culture.

In order for a teacher to fully exceed expectations for the descriptors under this indicator, it would be visible that the teacher has established a classroom environment that optimizes learning and includes students in creating the physical environment in order to increase the feeling of classroom community, inclusivity, and empowerment. Overall, the classroom environment should be positive and supportive for students in order to optimize learning. A positive classroom environment is one in which all students feel that they belong, are welcomed, trust others, and feel encouraged to take on challenges. The classroom environment should promote students in taking risks and asking questions of themselves, one another, and the teacher. Such an environment provides relevant content (connected to Presenting Instructional Content), clear learning goals (connected to Standards and Objectives) and feedback, opportunities to build students' social skills, and strategies to help students succeed.

Content and Curriculum Connections

All students must have access to grade-level content in order for there to be equity in the classroom. Expectations should be set for all students to master the standards at the rigor in which they are written. While content should be presented at grade level for all students, the resources provided in high-quality curriculum should be utilized to provide scaffolds and interventions as needed to provide students with gaps in understanding the opportunity to reach grade-level mastery. Instruction should be planned through the lens of individual students without taking away from the integrity of the curriculum.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students are working in collaborative groups, providing and receiving feedback
- Students are choosing how to utilize the resources and technology they need to master content as needed
- Students are identifying work that evidences mastery of content
- Students are reflecting on their progress with other students and asking questions of their teacher and their peers to clarify gaps in understanding
- Students are curious about what they are learning and conducting additional research and questioning content without being prompted to do so
- Students are attempting to complete tasks outside their comfort level without fear of failure
- Students are engaged in trial and error problem-solving in collaboration with their classmates

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
welcomes	A classroom that welcomes everyone is one in which all students feel like they belong and are a part of the community that makes up the class. Non-members feel comfortable visiting the classroom because there is an open-door policy, and they feel their presence is acknowledged and that the members of the class are glad they are there.
safe	When students feel safe, they are free to express their opinions, complete tasks, answer questions, and provide their peers feedback without fear of experiencing humiliation or harm. All students feel that their input is valued.
accessible	When learning and resources that enhance learning are accessible, the classroom is organized in a way that all students know where to find the resources they need. Additionally, the learning is differentiated so that all students have access to the content based on their learning style and level. Students are able to maximize their learning.
equitable	An equitable classroom is one in which all students have the same ease of access to materials and content. Students also have the same opportunities to participate in and showcase their learning in a way that allows them to make both qualitative and quantitative gains at the same pace as their peers.
opportunities	When students are given opportunities, they are provided with tasks, support, and collaborative structures that allow them to show evidence of mastery. They are also able to own their learning and can push themselves beyond mastery.
student work	Student work includes any product that a student completes that allows them to show evidence of mastery or progress toward mastery, along with any verbal contribution a student makes to their own learning.
positive	A positive classroom culture is one in which mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth and where each person feels valued and engaged at a level that encourages them to perform their best. Each person is uplifted by the success of every other person in the class. There is a culture and expectation that all students will succeed and their success will be celebrated.

inclusive	An inclusive classroom is one in which all students no matter their academic, social, emotional, or communication needs are welcomed and supported in their learning and growth.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***The classroom:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
welcomes all students and guests and provides a safe space for all students to take risks and interact with peers	Students need to feel like they are valued for their individuality within the classroom. They need to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and attempting work they may not be successful with on the first try without fear of being humiliated. A classroom characterized by a culture of collaboration where everyone is an important part of the same community in the classroom is welcoming. Students should encourage each other and debate respectively utilizing academic conversation norms when there is a difference of opinion. These norms could include actions such as maintaining eye contact, validating what others have said, and listening and not responding until the speaker is finished. Feedback is freely given and received with a positive tone.	The teacher stood in the doorway and greeted each student. Students are observed greeting each other as class began. The seats are arranged in pods of four desks that can easily be moved if needed to change groupings. Norms for class culture are posted on an anchor chart and are written in a positive tone. Positive affirmations and words of encouragement are also displayed throughout the room depicting different cultures and ethnicities. The students are provided three opportunities throughout the lesson to collaborate with their pod members to complete a task and are observed throughout the lesson questioning each other and providing feedback when working independently as needed. All desks are facing the front of the room, and the teacher is able to move around the room and reach all students easily. There is a kidney-shaped table at the front of the room that the teacher uses for small group instruction as needed. Student journals are kept in baskets along the counter, and there is a space to turn in completed work. There is a labeled area on the board where objectives and success criteria are posted. Anchor charts that connect to learning objectives are posted where all students can see them. During a science lesson where students worked collaboratively to construct a bridge, students discussed which materials would be the strongest to construct their bridge as well as design options. The teacher placed all materials needed to construct the bridges in individual group containers. Students get up and get additional resources as needed. Two students retrieved calculators from their pockets on the wall and one student is observed going to the docking station and getting a laptop to look up various bridge designs. All students who gathered additional
is clearly organized and designed for and with students to promote learning for all.	The room is arranged in a way that allows all students access to the teacher and to collaborate with other students easily. Special considerations are made for students who have difficulties seeing or hearing the instruction. Everyone feels like they are in the center of the learning environment.	
has supplies, equipment and resources easily and readily accessible to provide equitable opportunities for all students.	All students have access to any of the supplies, equipment and resources they need to master content and are encouraged to utilize them as needed. There are norms for accessing and returning resources that allow for ease of use with	

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor ***The classroom:***	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	little disruption to others and without wasting time.	supplies and/or resources are observed putting them back in the same place they got them. No disruptions of others are evidenced while students retrieve supplies, and they are all free to move about as needed. During an independent reading time during an ELA class, two students retrieved reading guides to assist them follow along in the text. Also, one student went to the computer and utilized assistive technology to read the text to her. There were two bulletin boards in a math classroom observed that contain student work related to the unit of study they are currently working on. There were a variety of levels of mastery posted, but all work had positive feedback attached pointing out strengths of the work. One bulletin board had student reflections on glows from their work. During the last 15 minutes of class, the teacher had students choose one piece of work they would like to showcase for the end of the unit. They compiled all their work for the unit in a portfolio along with the success criteria for each piece of work. In a social studies classroom, students are seated two to a table next to each other. The tables are in rows. At one point during the lesson, students are asked to construct a claim with their table partner. After the claims were developed with their partner, they were told to share their claims with their "pod." Students at each table in front simply turned to the table behind them to create a group of four. The teacher rotated to each group of four students and provided feedback as needed. One group of students was heard referencing the anchor chart that explains how to write a claim. One student says, "Let's check our success criteria and make sure we have included all the parts." Another student says, "Oh, we need to go back into the text and make sure we can pull evidence to support this claim."
displays current student work that promotes a positive and inclusive classroom environment.	Student work that evidences mastery of content as well as growth toward mastery is displayed and changed often so that all students have their work displayed throughout the year. Students have a voice in which work they would like showcased and how they would like it displayed. Work that is displayed has positive feedback that provides insight as to why it is evidence of strong work and/or growth.	
is arranged to maximize individual and group learning and to reinforce a positive classroom culture.	The room is arranged so that students can easily work in groups or individually without disturbing others. There is space for the teacher to easily rotate among the students, and students have access to the teacher when needed. Supplies, resources, and technology are housed and arranged in a way that allows students to access them easily. There are positive messages posted along with anchor charts connected to learning objectives to utilize as resources. Goals are posted and referenced. Learning targets and success criteria are visible and communicated to all students and easily referenced.	

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do you ensure that all students in your classroom feel welcomed and that they are in a safe environment for learning?

- How do you organize your classroom so that all students have access to the supplies, technology, and any other resources they need to master content?
- Why is it important for all students to have their work showcased and displayed in the classroom? How do you determine which work to display?
- How does your room arrangement help to create a positive classroom culture and maximize student collaboration and learning?
- Why is it important for students to be able to take risks and how do you facilitate this in your classroom?
- How do you ensure that a positive classroom culture is maintained?

Respectful Culture

Indicator Overview
A respectful culture in the classroom facilitates learning and is connected to Instruction. Additionally, a sustainable, positive classroom environment begins with a respectful culture.

In order for a teacher to fully exceed expectations for the descriptors under this indicator, it would be visible that there is an atmosphere that has moved beyond simply focusing on the interaction between students and the teacher. Instead, the classroom should reflect an atmosphere of mutual respect where students are also treating each other with respect. The result is a classroom where more learning takes place as students feel safe, motivated, and respected.

Achieving this atmosphere takes equal effort on the part of the teacher as well as the students. Teachers most often set this in motion when they develop a set of collective expectations for how everyone might treat one another in the classroom and then the teacher consistently models these expectations for the students and praises when other students model these expectations. The teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions demonstrate overall care, kindness, and respect for one another and celebrate all students' backgrounds and cultures. Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom by students working in groups and providing praise and positive feedback and often celebrating success.

Additionally, students are making positive personal connections with one another and are comfortable in challenging one another's ideas. These interdependent characteristics tremendously impact learning and facilitate a strong environment that further facilitates student motivation as well as thinking and problem-solving.

Content and Curriculum Connections

In order to build a strong environment and a respectful culture for learning, it is critical that teachers use curriculum and content that is inclusive of a variety of different cultures and backgrounds. Teachers must also know their students' needs, abilities, and interests in order to choose appropriate and engaging activities aligned to the curriculum. This will foster a respectful culture in the classroom environment, and it also creates a safe place that promotes learning for all students.

Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning

- Students actively display the expected norms such as acknowledging viewpoints or ideas.
- Students make personal and positive connections with one another throughout the lessons.
- Students respond to each other with affirmative comments and cheer for each other when correct responses are provided without the teacher prompting them.
- Students are comfortable respectfully challenging content and/or their peers' ideas around the content.
- Students feel safe to express their opinions and interests in the classroom.
- Students are patient with each other and respect their peers.

Key Terms in the Rubric and/or Handbook	
Culture	Culture refers to the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people.
Interests and opinions of all students	In planning for lessons, teachers should take into consideration how all students will best relate to the content they are learning.
Foster positive interactions	Fostering positive interactions refers to the teacher encouraging and promoting the development of good communication skills among his students.
Receptive	Teachers must be willing to consider or accept new suggestions or ideas.
Interdependence	Interdependence refers to students understanding or recognizing that their individual success is linked to the success of others. Students support and challenge each other throughout tasks to ensure collective success.

Descriptors: Meaning & Actions

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
Teacher-student and student-student interactions consistently demonstrate caring, kindness, and respect for one another and celebrate and acknowledge all students' background and culture.	The teacher should work with students to create a classroom environment that is positive and supportive for students in order to optimize learning for all. A positive classroom environment is one in which all students feel that they belong, are welcomed, trust others, and feel encouraged to take on challenges. The teacher should provide opportunities to build students' social skills and strategies to help students succeed. Students encourage each other and debate respectively utilizing academic conversation norms when there is a difference of opinion. These norms could include maintaining eye contact, validating what others have said, and listening and not responding until the speaker is finished. Feedback is freely given and received with a positive tone. The teacher should facilitate a learning environment that includes and celebrates all students, even those represented in their classroom community. Students need to understand why it is important to communicate with other students in a respectful manner even when they disagree with their thoughts, ideas or beliefs.	Students working in groups can be heard providing praise/positive feedback to students celebrating quick wins and success. Agreed upon and taught sentence stems are used to actively support the discourse. The teacher reinforces this behavior by providing praise and recognition of students working together (highlighting specific actions) using the school-based reward system. Students are actively displaying the established norms such as waiting for others to finish their talking and acknowledging other viewpoints or ideas. Students are commenting about those ideas, such as "I can understand why you are saying that." Teacher responds, "I like how you are acknowledging his viewpoint in your discussion. Who else wants to comment on that?" Students respond appropriately.
Teacher seeks out and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students.	The first step to differentiate for interests is to find out what students care about and like to do. Teachers should incorporate lessons that give students choices based on a variety of interests. When a topic connects to what students like to do, engagement deepens as they willingly spend time thinking, having conversations and creating	At the beginning of the school year, the teacher has the students complete surveys/student profile cards to collect data on their likes and interests. With this data, the teacher is able to make connections between the content and the student's interests. For example, if students are working on an ELA lesson about making inferences, the teacher may choose a song from one of her students' favorite singers and have the students make inferences about the lyrics.

Exemplary Descriptor Explanation and In-Action Scenario		
Rubric Descriptor	Explanation	Possible Evidence
	ideas in meaningful ways. Connecting learning to real-world experiences is a key learning technique with differentiating for student interests.	The teacher may also have the students complete a learning preferences assessment. This assessment will give the teacher more insight on how all of the students in her class prefer to learn. The teacher then knows what learning techniques to incorporate into her lessons.
Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom.	Students feel like they are valued for their individuality. There is a culture of collaboration where everyone feels as if he is an important part of the same community in the classroom.	Students have been working on 2-digit by 1-digit multiplication in their math class. Students now have the opportunity to practice working some problems with a partner using a collaborative grouping structure. During this structure, one student works the problem as the other student coaches them as needed. Students can be heard saying things such as "You were on the right track, but you forgot to carry your 1." "You're almost there, but what's 3 x 9?" Students continue alternating problems until they have completed them all.

Suggested Coaching Questions

- How do students respectfully challenge each other when they have differing views?
- Why is it important to foster positive student-to-student interactions to promote care, kindness, and respect in the classroom?
- Are students empowered to make decisions? How do you know?
- Why is it important to know what students are interested in?
- How does showing respect facilitate student interdependence?
- In this lesson, how are students working together to extend each other's thinking?

Pre-Conference Planning

The purpose of the pre-conference is to ensure that the teacher and the observer are able to connect prior to an announced observation. Observers conduct a pre-conference meeting to obtain pertinent background information about the lesson plan and students involved 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, and any other topics that will help them with context for the observation. 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.

General Tips for the Pre-Conference Process

- Submit your lesson plan to the observer at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled pre-conference.
- Be open to engage in a conversation about your classroom and the individual students in your classroom.
- Be prepared to talk through your lesson with your observer.
- Be prepared to answer clarifying questions the observer may ask.
- Be an active listener, including writing down any suggestions that the observer provides.
- Ask questions of the observer to ensure your understanding.
- Use the pre-conference as an opportunity to learn about effective instruction, as it is a time to reflect on your own personal growth.

Sample Pre-Conference Questions

- What is the objective of my lesson? Is the objective aligned with state standards?
- What do I expect the students to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson?
- Where is this lesson in the context of our unit plan?
- What are the prerequisite skills that the students have to know in order to be successful?
- How will I know that students have mastered the objectives in this lesson?
- What is the criteria for mastery of the objective?
- How have I planned for opportunities for all students to engage in activities and materials aligned with the lesson objectives?
- How will I differentiate instruction in order to address a variety of learning styles?
- How will I group students to enhance lesson outcomes?
- What have I been working on to improve my instruction this year?
- What are my plans for assessment, lesson closure, and student reflection?

Post-Conference Planning

The purpose of the post-conference is to provide a teacher with the opportunity to self-reflect on her lesson with guidance and support from the observer. The observer will ask questions to guide this reflection. During the post-conference, a teacher and observer will discuss an area of reinforcement (relative strength of the lesson) and an area of refinement (relative area of improvement). These areas will be identified by the observer based on the lesson's evidence, analysis of student work, and rubric indicators. The primary focus of the post-conference is on two indicators or descriptors from the rubric; one area of relative strength and the other any area of growth as opposed to detailed feedback on multiple indicators.

General Tips for Preparing for the Post-Conference:

- Reflect on all parts of the lesson through the lens of instructional delivery and student outcomes.
- Analyze your student work samples to determine if students were successful in meeting the lesson's objective.
- Following this reflection, self-rate your lesson while reading through each of the indicators and descriptors for the Planning, Instruction, and Environment Domains.
- Provide your self-reflection scores to the observer prior to the post-conference.
- Come to the post-conference prepared to discuss your reflections with your observer.
- Be open to the feedback and evidence the observer provides you during the post-conference. Think of the post-conference as an individualized professional development opportunity.

Sample Questions to Ask Yourself Prior to the Post Conference:

- Based on my analysis of the lesson and student work, what were the strengths of the lesson?
- If I were to teach the lesson again, what might I do differently?
- How did the lesson meet the needs of all students?
- What trends did I identify in my analysis of student work?
- Were my students successful in meeting the lesson's objective? How do I know?

Appendix A: Teacher Content Knowledge Look For Tool: English Language Arts

Look-for Tool: English Language Arts

Supports walkthroughs and feedback on subject-specific instructional strategies

Purpose:

This tool is intended to help leaders **provide feedback on practices associated with strengthening teacher's content knowledge as they shift to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum**. It is based on the descriptors in the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator within the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric and includes aligned, concrete "look-fors" for English language arts. The second descriptor in the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator, *implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies*, defines look-fors in more detail in three subcategories – *focus, questioning,* and *student work* – that point to the primary shifts that occur as teachers align to the depth required by college and career readiness standards. **Focus** defines the overarching practices a leader should see for this subject. **Questioning** details what a leader should hear in classroom discussion to better ensure that specific-subject depth is achieved. **Student work** describes the tasks that should be utilized as teachers shift to more rigorous expectations.

The look-fors provide suggestions of potential evidence; however, the lists in this tool are not exhaustive, and coaches should use their own context and understanding to consider other ways a teacher may demonstrate his or her content knowledge in practice.

How to use this tool:

This tool can be used by school leaders and coaches during walkthroughs or observations to identify evidence of practices associated with strengthening teacher's content knowledge as they shift to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum. It is intended to provide feedback to teachers as they work to deepen student learning. The tool provides a developmental continuum for the observer to provide an assessment of the teacher's content knowledge as demonstrated in practice. Coaches and teachers are also encouraged to discuss the evidence from walkthroughs, observations, and analysis of student work in pre- and post-conference sessions and in professional learning communities as appropriate.

This tool uses the following descriptors from level 5 – exemplary practice – on the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric for Teacher Content Knowledge:

	Level 5 – Exemplary
Teacher Content Knowledge	● Teacher **displays extensive content knowledge and understanding** of both **state standards and instructional materials**, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach. ● Teacher consistently **implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies** to enhance student content knowledge. ● Teacher consistently **highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas**.

Key context from the descriptor	Look-fors: Examples of evidence	Observation
Displays extensive content knowledge and understanding of state standards and instructional materials	Teacher uses resources and activities that are aligned with the rigor of the standard(s) and objective(s).	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher restates purpose throughout lesson and connects purpose to each element of lesson.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher shares why and how lesson objective(s) connect to everyday lives, future learning in near term (tomorrow/next week), and long term (for the year) learning.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher has students preview new learning in materials.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	
Implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies	**Focus in ELA**	
	Majority of lesson focused on students reading, writing, or speaking about text(s).	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students are engaged in at or above grade-level texts for the majority of the lesson.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher appropriately scaffolds materials in order to reach grade level expectations; uses resources and strategies that progress in difficulty and/or have entry points for students of different skill levels.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Texts improve student knowledge about the world around them and the varied qualitative features of literary and non-fiction text, including structure, language, and the craft of writing.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Questioning in ELA	

	Teacher sequences questions that allow students to progress in their understanding of the text and build knowledge of the topic(s).	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher ensures students use the text to find evidence to support and answer questions.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher intentionally improves student questions and/or responses by actively reframing and asking students more questions to help refine their questions and/or responses; Teacher questions also prompt deeper student learning.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Student Work in ELA	
	Tasks are directly connected to texts and student materials provided in the lesson and match the rigor of the standard(s) and objective(s).	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students engage in writing tasks that are connected to what they read and deepen their understanding and thinking.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	
Highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas	Teacher connects lesson ideas to key concepts within a unit to help students transfer knowledge to other related concepts/ideas	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher references and uses prompting questions about current events and ideas from today's culture to help students connect to learning	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	

Appendix B: Teacher Content Knowledge Look For Tool: Math

Look-for Tool: Math

Supports walkthroughs and feedback on subject-specific instructional strategies

Purpose:

This tool is intended to help leaders **provide feedback on practices associated with strengthening teacher's content knowledge as they shift to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum**. It is based on the descriptors in the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator (noted below) within the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric and includes aligned, concrete "look-fors" for math. The second descriptor in the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator, *implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies*, defines look-fors in more detail in three subcategories – *focus, questioning,* and *student work* – that point to the primary shifts that occur as teachers align to the depth required by college and career readiness standards. **Focus** defines the overarching practices a leader should see for this subject. **Questioning** details what a leader should hear in classroom discussion to better ensure that specific-subject depth is achieved. **Student work** describes the tasks that should be utilized as teachers shift to more rigorous expectations.

The look-fors provide suggestions of potential evidence; however, the lists in this tool are not exhaustive, and coaches should use their own context and understanding to consider other ways a teacher may demonstrate his or her content knowledge in practice.

How to use this tool:

This tool can be used by school leaders and coaches during walkthroughs or observations to identify evidence of practices associated with strengthening teacher's content knowledge as they shift to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum. It is intended to provide feedback to teachers as they work to deepen student learning. The tool provides a developmental continuum for the observer to provide an assessment of the teacher's content knowledge as demonstrated in practice. Coaches and teachers are also encouraged to discuss the evidence from walkthroughs, observations, and analysis of student work in pre- and post-conference sessions and in professional learning communities as appropriate.

This tool uses the following descriptors from level 5 – exemplary practice – on the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric for Teacher Content Knowledge:

	Level 5 – Exemplary
Teacher Content Knowledge	• Teacher **displays extensive content knowledge and understanding** of both **state standards and instructional materials**, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach. • Teacher consistently **implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies** to enhance student content knowledge. • Teacher consistently **highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas**.

Key context from the descriptor	Look-fors: Examples of evidence	Observation
Displays extensive content knowledge and understanding of state standards and instructional materials	Teacher uses resources and activities that are aligned with the rigor of the standard(s) and objective(s).	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher restates purpose throughout lesson and connects purpose to each element of lesson.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher shares why and how lesson objective(s) connect to everyday lives, future learning in near term (tomorrow/next week), and long term (for the year) learning.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher has students preview new learning in materials.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	
Implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies	**Focus in Math**	
	Majority of lesson focused on the depth required by the standard.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher clearly explains larger conceptual meaning preceding a focus on procedures.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher guides practice to ensure student ownership of learning.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher shows how math concept is applied using a variety of examples.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Questioning in Math	
	Teacher sequences questions that allow students to progress in their understanding of and build knowledge of the concept(s).	Yes Some Not Yet

	Teacher uses a variety of representations and visuals (graphical, numerical, analytical, contextual) to support instruction and questioning.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher asks questions in a way that allows students to do the thinking.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher uses mistakes to provide additional opportunities to learn.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Student Work in Math	
	Students are regularly engaged in tasks that require them to think, reason, and problem-solve.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students are engaged in writing about math to sharpen their thinking and reasoning skills.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students have regular opportunities to share and discuss math concepts, ideas, and problems with peers, teachers, and other adults.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	
Highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas	Teacher connects lesson ideas to key concepts within a unit to help students transfer knowledge to other related concepts/ideas	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher references and uses prompting questions about current events and ideas from today's culture to help students connect to learning	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	

Look-for Tool: Science

Supports walkthroughs and feedback on subject-specific instructional strategies

Purpose:

This tool is intended to help leaders **provide feedback on practices associated with strengthening a teacher's content knowledge as they shift to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum**. It is based on the descriptors in the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator (noted below) within the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric and includes aligned, concrete "look-fors" for science.

The second descriptor in the Teacher Content Knowledge indicator defines look-fors in more detail in three subcategories – *focus, questioning,* and *student work* – that point to the primary shifts that occur as teachers align to the depth required by college and career readiness standards.

- ***Focus*** defines the overarching practices a leader should see for this subject.
- ***Questioning*** details what a leader should hear in classroom discussion to better ensure that specific-subject depth is achieved.
- ***Student work*** describes the tasks that should be utilized as teachers shift to more rigorous expectations.

The look-fors provide suggestions of potential evidence; however, the lists in this tool are not exhaustive, and coaches should use their own context and understanding to consider other ways a teacher may demonstrate his or her content knowledge in practice. Additionally, there is a glossary at the end of the tool to help define science-specific terminology.

How to use this tool:

This tool can be used by school leaders and coaches during walkthroughs or observations to identify evidence of practices associated with strengthening teacher's content knowledge as they shift to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum. It is intended to provide feedback to teachers as they work to deepen student learning. The tool provides a developmental continuum for the observer to provide an assessment of the teacher's content knowledge as demonstrated in practice. Coaches and teachers are also encouraged to discuss the evidence from walkthroughs, observations, and analysis of student work in pre- and post-conference sessions and in professional learning communities as appropriate.

This tool uses the following descriptors from level 5 – exemplary practice – on the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric:

	Level 5 – Exemplary *Consistent Evidence of Student-Centered Learning/Student Ownership of Learning – Teacher and Students Facilitate the Learning*
Teacher Content Knowledge	1. Teacher **displays extensive content knowledge and understanding** of both **state standards and instructional materials**, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach. 2. Teacher consistently **implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies** to enhance student content knowledge. 3. Teacher consistently **highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas**.

Key context from the descriptor	Look-fors: Examples of evidence	Observation
1. Displays extensive content knowledge and understanding of state standards and instructional materials, including curriculum	Teacher engages students in resources and activities that are aligned with the rigor of the standard(s) and objective(s) and are anchored in explaining scientific phenomena.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students demonstrate understanding of the lesson's purpose throughout the lesson and connect purpose to each element of the lesson.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher shares why and how lesson objective(s) connect to everyday lives, future learning in near term (tomorrow/next week), and long term (for the year) learning, with attention to the spiral nature of science instruction from year-to-year.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher introduces new learning by providing clues and focus questions around a scientific phenomenon so that students can engage in the new learning as a scientist.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	
2. Implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies	**Focus in Science**	
	Majority of the lesson is focused on students observing, using evidence, and creating explanations for the focus question(s) around a scientific phenomenon.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students engage in science and engineering practices in order to make sense of new learning and make connections to scientific phenomena.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher sequences the lesson to help students to make a claim, support with evidence, provide reasoning, and make rebuttals to counterclaims regarding scientific phenomena within a lesson or unit.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students are applying crosscutting concepts to connect what they are learning to other scientific ideas.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Questioning in Science	
	Teacher sequences questioning strategies to elicit, support, and challenge scientific thinking.	Yes Some Not Yet

Key context from the descriptor	Look-fors: Examples of evidence	Observation
	Teacher scaffolds questioning to assist student understanding of scientific vocabulary with just-in-time support within the lesson or unit.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students engage in inquiry, share findings, and make connections to scientific data or phenomena as they work collaboratively.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Student Work in Science	
	Student work supports inquiry, self-monitoring of learning, seeking out next steps, and using feedback to construct scientific explanations and develop sensemaking.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students are actively engaged in work that reflects what scientists do: reading, writing, and drawing; doing hands-on and/or digital investigations; modeling; and discussing findings.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students engage in evaluating scientific data, text, or questions to develop sensemaking, leading them to explain scientific phenomena.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	
3. Highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas	Teacher connects lesson ideas to key concepts within a unit to help students transfer knowledge to other related concepts/ideas and explain new phenomena.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Students make connections to essential ideas within and across disciplinary core ideas (physical science; life science; earth and space science; environmental science; engineering; technology; and applications of science) as appropriate.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Student learning is connected to crosscutting concepts to build knowledge of themes across disciplines of science and connect learning.	Yes Some Not Yet
	Comments:	

Glossary:

Crosscutting concepts: application across all domains of science and linking science domains together. These could include patterns; cause and effect; scale, proportion, and quantity; systems and system models; energy and matter; structure and function; and stability and change.

Phenomenon *(plural: phenomena):* observable fact or event

Science and engineering practices:

1. Asking questions (for science) and defining problems (for engineering)
2. Developing and using models
3. Planning and carrying out investigations
4. Analyzing and interpreting data
5. Using math and computational thinking
6. Constructing an explanation (for science) and designing a solution (for engineering)
7. Engaging in an argument stemming from evidence
8. Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Sensemaking: the process of making sense of or giving meaning to something, especially new ideas

Appendix C: Resources that Support the Implementation of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards

NIET has developed a number of tools and resources that support the implementation of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards. This appendix provides a brief description of some of these resources along with a link to each resource.

Instructional Strategies for Virtual Learning: A Companion Tool to the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric
This tool is designed to be used alongside the NIET K-12 Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric, but it could support any teacher or leader to deepen their understanding of high-quality virtual learning instruction. The tool references exemplary practice for every indicator of the NIET rubric, with descriptors included, and the tool includes specific examples and strategies for how those indicators could be adapted in a virtual setting. NIET will continue to add and modify this document as we learn more effective virtual learning strategies

Deep Dive: Transformation of Lessons from In-Person to Virtual – Stage One
This tool explores three particular indicators of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards (Presenting Instructional Content, Motivating Students, and Academic Feedback) and provides what those indicators "look and sound like" for both in-person and virtual modalities. Specific strategies for synchronous and asynchronous settings are provided.

Deep Dive: Transformation of Lessons from In-Person to Virtual with Rubric Indicator Connections – Stage One
This tools builds on the first **Deep Dive, Stage One** guide and provides identifies specific connections across rubric indicators. This resource highlights the holistic nature of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards and pinpoints specific connections of the Presenting Instructional Content, Motivating Students, and Academic Feedback indicators to a multitude of other indicators: Standards and Objectives, Lesson Structure and Pacing, Student Work, Teacher Content Knowledge, Thinking, Questioning, Activities and Materials, Questioning, Assessment, Teacher Knowledge of Students, Problem Solving, Grouping Students.

Deep Dive: Transformation of Lessons from In-Person to Virtual – Stage Two
This tool explores five particular indicators of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards (Standards and Objectives, Lesson Structure and Pacing, Activities and Materials, Questioning, and Teacher Content Knowledge) and provides what those indicators "look and sound like" for both in-person and virtual modalities. Specific strategies for synchronous and asynchronous settings are provided.

Deep Dive: Transformation of Lessons from In-Person to Virtual – Stage Three
This tool explores four particular indicators of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards (Grouping Students, Teacher Knowledge of Students, Thinking, and Problem-Solving) and provides what those indicators "look and sound like" for both in-person and virtual modalities. Specific strategies for synchronous and asynchronous settings are provided.

High Quality Curriculum Implementation: Connecting What to Teach to How to Teach
This report highlights lessons learned and recommendations for districts that are using high-quality curriculum and instructional materials. The paper underscores the importance of strengthening educators' professional learning and support – whether in-person or virtual – as districts and schools implement and utilize high-quality curriculum with students. NIET shares six lessons for ensuring high-quality curriculum results in meaningful improvements to student success, with recommendations for district, school, and teacher leaders as well as ideas for how to adapt those in a virtual setting.

Teacher Content Knowledge Look for Tool: Science

This tool is intended to help teacher provide feedback on practices associated with strengthening a teaacher's content knowledge as they shifrt to align with more rigorous standards and curriculum. It is based on the descriptors in the Teacher Content Knowledge iondcator within the NIET Teachig and Learning Standards Rubric and includes aligned, concrete "look fors" for science.

Appendix D: Research Supporting the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric

Indicator	**Exemplary Descriptors**	**Research**
Standards and Objectives	• All learning objectives and state content standards, and their connection to student work expectations, are explicitly communicated and understood by students. • Objectives and expectations are aligned to the depth and rigor of the standards; lesson content is aligned to the standards and objectives. • Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's major objective. • Students make connections between learning objectives and (a) what they have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) knowledge of other disciplines. • Expectations for each student's performance are clear, demanding, and high, and student work is aligned to state content standards and learning objectives. • Students are able to articulate expectations and explain those to their peers. • State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson with explanations. • Student work shows evidence that each student is progressing or demonstrating mastery of the objective(s).	Applebee, A. N., Adler, M., & Flihan, S. (2007). Chan, P. E., Graham-Day, K. J., Ressa, V. A., Peters, M. T., & Konrad, M. (2014). Jussim, L., Robustelli, S. L., & Cain, T. R. (2009). Meece, J. L., Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (2006). Penuel, W., Fishman, B. J., Gallagher, L. P., Korbak, C., & Lopez-Prado, B. (2009). Rivet, A. E., & Krajcik, J. S. (2008). Schmidt, W. H., Wang, H. C., & McKnight, C. C. (2005). Seidel, T., Rimmele, R., & Prenzel, M. (2005). Shwartz, Y., Weizman, A., Fortus, D., Krajcik, J., & Reiser, B. (2008). Traynor, A. (2017).
Motivating Students	• The teacher consistently organizes the content, including curriculum resources, so that it is personally meaningful, relevant, and intellectually engaging to students. • The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity, and exploration are valued. • Students are consistently engaged in their own learning, and the teacher reinforces students' initiative to learn more.	Anderson, R. C., Graham, M., Kennedy, P., Nelson, N., Stoolmiller, M., Baker, S. K., & Fien, H. (2019). Brooks, C. F., & Young, S. L. (2011). Conley, D. T., & French, E. M. (2014). Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (1999). Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Evans, M., & Boucher, A. R. (2015). Givens Rolland, R. (2012). Hidi, S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2000). James, M. C., & Scharmann, L. C. (2007). Knoster, K. C., & Goodboy, A. K., (2020). Orhan Özen, S. (2017). Schiefele, U. (2017). Stipek, D. (2002). Tze, V. M. C., Daniels, L. M., & Klassen, R. M., (2016).

Presenting Instructional Content	Presentation of content always includes: • visuals, including student work exemplars, 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 or student demonstrates accurate understanding of the content and meets performance expectations; • criteria that clarifies how students can be successful; • concise communication; • logical sequencing and segmenting; • all essential information; and • no irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information.	Butler, D. L., Schnellert, L., & Cartier, S. C. (2013). Cheng, L., Ritzhaupt, A. D., & Anonenko, P. (2019) Cook, M. P. (2006). Dalton, B., & Smith, B.E. (2012) Glen, N. J., & Dotger, S. (2009). Harp, S. F., & Maslich, A. A. (2005). Herman, J. L., Klein, D. C. D., & Abedi, J. (2000). Low, G. (2008). Nesbit, J. C., & Adesope, O. O. (2006). O'Neill, T. B. (2010). Öztürk, M., & Çakıroğlu, Ü. (2021). Richland, L.E., Zur, O., & Holyoak, K.J. (2007). Shwartz, Y., Weizman, A., Fortus, D., Krajcik, J., & Reiser, B. (2008). Stockard, J., Wood, T. W., Coughlin, C., & Rasplica Khoury, C. (2018) Sung, Y., Chang, K., & Liu, T. (2016) Webb, N. M., & Mastergeorge, A. (2003).
Lesson Structure and Pacing	The lesson starts promptly. • The lesson's structure is coherent, based on the content, and organized to meet students' needs, with time for reflection to ensure student understanding. • Pacing is brisk, adjusted for rigor of content and individual student learning expectations. • Students' individual needs are attended to and pacing provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates. • Students understand and engage in classroom routines and transitions to ensure efficient use of time.	Corno, L. (2008). Davis, E. A. (2003). Konrad, M., Helf, S., & Joseph, L. M. (2011). Russo, J., & Hopkins, S. (2017) Shwartz, Y., Weizman, A., Fortus, D., Krajcik, J., & Reiser, B. (2008).

Activities and Materials	Activities and materials include all of the following:
	• *Content:*
	  ○ support the lesson objectives;
	  ○ are challenging;
	  ○ elicit a variety of thinking;
	  ○ provide time for reflection;
	  ○ are relevant to students' lives;
	• *Student-centered:*
	  ○ sustain students' attention;
	  ○ provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction;
	  ○ evoke student curiosity and suspense;
	  ○ provide students with choices;
	• *Multiple materials:*
	  ○ incorporate multimedia and technology; and
	  ○ incorporate additional standards-based resources where appropriate to support individual and whole group understanding (e.g., teacher-made materials, manipulatives, resources from museums, cultural centers, etc.).
		Brophy, J. (2008).
		Cornelius-White, J. (2007).
		Davis, E. A. (2003).
		de Freitas, S. I. (2006).
		Dignath, C., & Buttner, G. (2008).
		Engelmann, K., Bannert, M., & Melzner, N. (2021).
		Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004).
		Harp, S. F., & Maslich, A. A. (2005).
		Hmelo-Silver, C. E. (2004).
		Kul, U., Celik, S., & Aksu, Z. (2018).
		Matsumura, L. C., Garnier, H., Pascal, J., & Valdes, R. (2002).
		McNeil, N., & Jarvin, L. (2007).
		Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006).
		Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004).
		Mouratidis, A., & Michou, A. (2011).
		O'Neill, T. B. (2010).
		Pahl, K., & Rowsell, J. (2010).

	• In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction, and students are continuously self-monitoring.	Porter, A. C. (2002). Webb, N. M., Franke, M. L., Ing, M., Chan, A., De, T., Freund, D., & Battey, D. (2008). Zimmerman, B. J. (2008).

Questioning	• Teacher questions are varied and high-quality, providing an appropriate mix of question types based on content:
	  ○ knowledge and comprehension;
	  ○ application and analysis; and
	  ○ creation and evaluation.
	• Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.
	• The frequency of questions consistently engages students in the rigor of the content and in critical thinking.
	• Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
	• Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided.
	• Students regularly respond to a variety of teacher questions (e.g., whole-class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers).
	• All students are actively answering questions and engaging with the teacher or each other to share their perspectives.
	• Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.
		Altermatt, E. R., Jovanovic, J., & Perry, M. (1998).
		Armendariz, F., & Umbreit, J. (1999).
		Benedict-Chambers, A., Kademian, S. M., Davis, E. A., & Palincsar, A. S. (2017).
		Boyd, M. & Rubin, D. (2006).
		Chin, C. (2007).
		Erdogan, I., & Campbell, T. (2008).
		Gillies, R. M. (2011).
		Hill, J. B. (2016).
		Jacques, L. A., Cian, H., Herro, D. C., & Quigley, C. (2020).
		Kazemi, E., & Stipek, D. (2001).
		Kelly, S. (2007).
		Lambert, M. C., Cartledge, G., Heward, W. L., & Lo, Y. (2006).
		Lustick, D. (2010).
		Nystrand, M., Wu, L. L., Gamoran, A., Zeiser, S., & Long, D. A. (2003).
		McCarthy, Pe., Sithole, A., McCarthy, Pa., Cho, J., & Gyan, E. (2016)
		Ponce, H. R., Mayer, R. E., Loyola, M. S., & López, M. J. (2020).
		Sperling, R. A. & Reeves, P. M. (2013).
		Staples, M. (2007).
		Stichter, J. P., Lewis, T. J., Whittaker, T. A., Richter, M., Johnson, N. W., & Trussell, R. P. (2009).
		Turner, J. C., & Patrick, H. (2004).

Academic Feedback	• Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality. • Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and review of independent work assignments. • The teacher circulates during instructional activities to prompt student thinking, assess each student's progress based on student work expectations, and provide individual feedback. • Feedback, both verbal and non-verbal, from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction. • Students give specific and clear feedback to each other based on the teacher's expectations.	Baliram, N. S., & Youde, J. J. (2018). Brookhart, S., Moss, C., & Long, B. (2009). Chan, P. E., Graham-Day, K. J., Ressa, V. A., Peters, M. T., & Konrad, M. (2014). Dawson, P., Henderson, M., Mahoney, P., Phillips, M., Ryan, T., Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2019). Forsythe, A., & Johnson, S. (2017). Hattie, J., & Gan, M. (2010). Matsumura, L. C., Patthey-Chavez, G. G., Valdes, R., & Garnier, H. (2002). Shute, V. J. (2008). Topping, K. J. (2009). Swart, E. K., Nielen, T. M. J., Sikkema - de Jong, M. T. (2019). Zimbardi, K., Colthorpe, K., Dekker, A., Engstrom, C., Bugarcic, A., Worthy, P., Victor, R., Chunduri, P., Lluka, L., Long, P. (2017).
Grouping Students	• The instructional grouping arrangements (whole class, small groups, pairs, or individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency.	Gillies, R. M., & Haynes, M. (2010). Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Roseth, C. (2010). Li, T., Han, L., Zhang, L., & Rozelle, S. (2014).

	• Teacher sets clear expectations that are understood by students. • In an instructional group, each student takes responsibility for their individual role, tasks, and group work expectations so they can have meaningful and productive collaboration. • In an instructional group, each student assumes accountability for completing 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. • Students set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning in instructional groups. • When provided the choice or independence, students make responsible decisions about how to group themselves.	Steenbergen-Hu, S., Makel, M.C., & Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2016). Tan, C. Y., & Dimmock, C. (2020). Webb, N. M. (2008). Webb, N. M., Franke, M. L., De, T. Chan, A. G., Freund, D., Shein, P., & Melkonian, D. K. (2009). van Dijk, A. M., Eysink, T. H., & de Jong, T. (2020).
Teacher Content Knowledge	• Teacher displays extensive content knowledge and understanding of both state standards and instructional materials, including their curriculum, for all the subjects they teach. • Teacher consistently implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge. • Teacher consistently highlights key concepts and ideas and uses them as the basis to connect other powerful ideas.	Ball, D. L., Thames, M. H., & Phelps, G. (2008). Hill, H. C., Rowan, B., & Ball, D. L. (2005). Gess-Newsome, J., Taylor, J. A., Carlson, J., Gardner, A. L., Wilson, C. D., & Stuhlsatz, M. A. M. (2019). Keller, M. M., Neumann, K., & Fischer, H. E. (2017). Murdock, J. (2008). Taber, K. S. (2008).
Teacher Knowledge of Students	• Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning abilities and challenges. • Teacher practices consistently incorporate student interests, backgrounds, and cultures. • Teacher consistently provides differentiated instructional content and strategies to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.	Chen, C., Sonnert, G., Sadler, P. M., & Sunbury, S. (2020). Hill, H. C., Ball, D. L., & Schilling, S. G. (2008). Hill, H. C., & Chin, M. (2018). McTighe, J., & Brown, J. L. (2005). Pacheco, M., & Gutierrez, K. (2009). Tomlinson, C. A, Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C. M., Moon, T. R., Brimijoin, K., … Reynolds, T. (2003). Seah, L. H., & Chan, K. K. H. (2020)

Thinking	• Students are actively engaged in multiple types of thinking: o 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.
	• The teacher and/or students model metacognitive strategies.
	• Students are provided opportunities to:
	  ○ generate a variety of ideas and alternatives;
	  ○ analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints; and
	  ○ monitor their thinking to ensure they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies they are using and why.
		Abrami, P. C., Bernard, R. M., Borokhovski, E., Waddington, D. L., Wade, C. A., & Persson, T. (2015).
		Beghetto, R. A. (2006).
		Beyer, B. K. (2008).
		Carroll, M. (2008).
		Clark, A., Anderson, R. C., Kuo, L., Kim, I., Archodidou, A., & Nguyen-Jahiel, K. (2003).
		Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Prentice, K., Burch, M., Hamlett, C. L., Owen, R., … Jancek, D. (2003).
		Kaufman, J. C., & Beghetto, R. A. (2009).
		Marshall, J.C., & Horton, R. M. (2011).
		Mawtus, B., Rodriguez-Cuadrado, S., Ludke, K. M., & Nicolson, R. L. (2019).
		Merrill, M. D. (2002).

Problem-solving	• Students engage in activities that reinforce several of the following problem-solving types:
	  ○ Abstraction
	  ○ Categorization
	  ○ Drawing conclusions/justifying solutions
		Cheng, S., She, J. & Huang, L. (2017).
		Cho, K., & Jonassen, D. H. (2002).
		Jonassen, D. H. (2000).

	○ Predicting outcomes ○ Observing and experimenting ○ Improving solutions ○ Identifying relevant/irrelevant information ○ Generating ideas ○ Creating and designing	Julien, H., & Barker, S. (2009). King, A. (2008). Kuhn, D., & Pease, M. (2008). Levering, K., & Kurtz, K. J. (2010). Moreno, R., Ozogul, G., & Reisslein, M. (2011). Nicolaidou, I., Kyza, E. A., Terzian, F., Hadjichambis, A., Kafouris, D. (2011). Sandoval, W. A., & Cam, A. (2011). Schwarz, C. V., Reiser, B. J., Davis, E. A., Kenyon, L., Acher, A., Fortus, D., … Krajcik, J. (2009). Zimmerman, C. (2007).

Indicator	Exemplary Descriptor	Research

Instructional Plans	Instructional plans include:
	• measurable and explicit objectives aligned to state standards and aligned curriculum, both in content and in rigor;
	• activities, materials, and assessments that:
	  ○ are aligned to state standards; content, including curriculum; and success criteria;
	  ○ are sequenced and scaffolded based on student need;
	  ○ build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students' lives, and integrate other disciplines as appropriate; and
	  ○ provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson closure;
	• evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners;
	• evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs and student choice; and
	• strategies for student autonomy and ownership.
		Anghileri, J. (2006).
		Applebee, A. N., Adler, M., & Flihan, S. (2007).
		Aronson & Laughter (2016)
		Ayala, C. C., Shavelson, R. J., Ruiz-Primo, M. A., Brandon, P. R., Yin, Y., Furtak, E. M., … Tomita, M. K. (2008).
		Cizek, G. J. (2009).
		Ginsberg, M. B. (2005).
		Hosp, J. L., & Ardoin, S. P. (2008).
		Martone, A., & Sireci, S. G. (2009).
		McNeill, K. L. Lizotte, D. J., Krajcik, J., & Marx, R. W. (2006).
		Ok, Rao, Bryant, & McDougall, (2017)
		Timperley, H. S., & Parr, J. M. (2009).
		Tsai, Y., Kunter, M., Ludtke, O., Trautwein, U., & Ryan, R. M. (2008).
		Webb, N. L. (2007).
		Zohar, A. (2012).

Student Work	Assignments are: • always aligned to the rigor and depth of the standards and curriculum content. • always aligned to the lesson's objective and include descriptions of how assessment results will inform future instruction. Students: • 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.	Belland, B. R., Glazewski, K. D., & Richardson, J. C. (2008). Kim, Belland, & Axelrod (2018) Lei, Cui, & Zhou (2018) Marks, H. M. (2000). Marshall, J.C., & Horton, R. M. (2011). McDermott, M. A., & Hand, B. (2010). Purcell-Gates, V., Duke, N. K., & Martineau, J. A. (2007).
Assessment	Assessments: • are aligned with the depth and rigor of the state standards and content, including curriculum resources; are designed to provide feedback on progress against objectives; • use a variety of question types and formats to gauge student learning and problem-solving; • measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple-choice); • require extended written tasks as appropriate; • include clear illustrations of student progress toward state standards, which students monitor, understand, and articulate; and • include descriptions of how assessment results will be used by teachers and students to inform future instruction and learning.	Black & Wiliam (2018) Brookhart, S., Moss, C., & Long, B. (2009). Furtak, M. E., & Ruiz-Primo, M. A. (2008). Gearhart, M., & Osmundson, E. (2009). Hiebert, J., Morris, A. K., Berk, D., & Jansen, A. (2007). Kim, Belland, & Axelrod (2018) Li, H., Xiong, Y., Hunter, C. V., Guo, X., & Tywoniw, R. (2020). Shepard, L. A. (2001). Tillema, H., & Smith, K. (2007). Yang, Y., van Aalst, J., & Chan, C. K. (2020).

Indicator	Exemplary Descriptor	Research
Expectations	• Teacher engages students in learning with clear and rigorous academic expectations and actively uses aligned and differentiated materials and resources to ensure equitable access to learning. • Students regularly learn from their mistakes and can describe their thinking on what they learned. • Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students consistently experience success. • Students lead opportunities that support learning. • Students take initiative to meet or exceed teacher expectations. • Teacher optimizes instructional time to ensure each student meets their learning goals.	Canning et al. (2019). Costa, A. L. & Kallick, B. (2008). Ding & Rubie-Davies (2019). Gentrup et al. (2020). Henningsen, M., & Stein, M. K. (1997) Kuklinski, M. R., & Weinstein, R. S. (2000). Matsumura, L. C., Slater, S. C., & Crosson, A. (2008). McCombs, B. (2010). Patrick, H. Anderman, L. H., Ryan, A. M., Edelin, K. C., & Midgley, C. (2001). Ponitz, C. C., Rimm- Kaufman, S. E., & Brock, L. L. (2009). Rosenthal & Jacobsen (1968) Stepanek, J. (2000). Zimmerman, B. J. (1998).
Engaging Students and Managing Behavior	• Students are consistently engaged in behaviors that optimize learning and increase time on task. • Teacher and students establish collective commitments for learning and behavior. • Teacher consistently uses and students reinforce several techniques (e.g., rewards, approval, contingent activities, consequences, etc.) that maintain student engagement and promote a positive classroom environment. • Teacher consistently recognizes and motivates positive behaviors and does not allow inconsequential behavior to interrupt the lesson. • The teacher addresses individual students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class. • The teacher quickly attends to disruptions with minimal interruption to learning.	Bear, G. G. (1998). Center on PBIS (2020). Darling-Hammond, L. & Cook-Harvey, C. (2018). Gage et al. (2018). Hoy, A. W., & Weinstein, C. S. (2006). Kern, L., & Clemens, N. H. (2007). Korpershoek et al. (2016). Koth, C. W., Bradshaw, C. P., & Leaf, P. J. (2008). Larson et al. (2020). Matjasko, J. L. (2011). McCombs, B. (2010). Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., & Sugai, G. (2008). Solomon, D., Battistich, V., Kim, D., & Watson, M. (1997). Stage, S. A., & Quiroz, D. R. (1997). Sutherland, K. S., Lewis-Palmer, T., Stitcher, J.,& Morgan, P. L. (2008).
Environment	The classroom: • welcomes all students and guests and provides a safe space for all students to take risks and interact with peers. • is clearly organized and designed for and with students to promote learning for all. • has supplies, equipment, and resources easily and readily accessible to provide equitable opportunities for all students. • displays current student work that promotes a positive and inclusive classroom environment. • is arranged to maximize individual and group learning and to reinforce a positive classroom culture.	Barowy, W., & Smith, J. E. (2008). Bucholz & Sheffler (2009). Cheryan, Ziegler, & Plaut (2014). Cohen, E. G. (1994). Dorman, Aldridge, & Fraser (2006). Evans, G. W., Yoo, M. J., & Sipple, J. (2010). Killeen, J. P., Evans, G. W., & Danko, S. (2003). Kumar, R., O'Malley, P.M., & Johnston, L. D. (2008). Martin, S. H. (2002). Maxwell, L. E., & Chmeilewski, E. (2008). Milkie, M. A., & Warner, C. H. (2011). Read, M. A. (2010). Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., Sugai, G.(2008). Teaching Tolerance (2018). Weimer (2009).

Respectful Culture	• Teacher-student and student-student interactions consistently demonstrate caring and respect for one another and celebrate and acknowledge all students' background and culture. • Teacher fosters positive teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions that demonstrate overall care, kindness, 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.	Bertucci et al. (2016). Center on PBIS (2020). Crosnoe, R. Johnson, M. K., & Elder, G. H. (2004). Hallinan, M. T. (2008). Hamm, J. V., Farmer, T. W., Dadisman, K., Gravelle, M., & Murray, A. R. (2011). Larson et al. (2018). McCombs, B. (2010). O'Connor, E.E., Dearing, E.,& Collins, B. A. (2011). Patrick, H., Anderman, L. H., Ryan, A. M., Edelin, K. C., & Midgley, C. (2001). Muller, C. (2001). Roth, G., Kanat-Maymon, Y., & Bibi, U. (2011). Sandilos, Rimm-Kaufman, & Cohen (2017). Shann, M. H. (1999). Teaching Tolerance (2018). Vandenbroucke et al. (2017).

Appendix E: Resources that Support the Teacher Evaluator

The NIET certified teacher evaluator plays a key role in the effective implementation of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards. The tools provided in this appendix are available to guide the work of the NIET evaluator. In particular, the appendix includes:

- Guidance on Becoming a Certified Evaluator
- Guidance on Conducting a Pre-Conference, and
- Guidance and Tools for Conducting a Post-Conference.

Becoming a Certified Evaluator

Principals, assistant principals, university faculty and other instructional leaders (i.e., TAP Master Teachers, TAP Mentor Teaches, Teacher Leaders, etc.) who have attended the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric Evaluator Training are eligible to serve as qualified evaluators. All designated evaluators/observers must participate in required certification training and demonstrate proficiency in the NIET observation process by successfully completing an online certification test to become certified.

Online Evaluator Test Overview

This online certification assessment consists of two parts:

Part One: Lesson Analysis

For this portion of the test, each prospective evaluator views a video of a teacher conducting a lesson, which the individual scores using the performance indicators on the rubric. Scoring of the "Lesson Analysis" part of the test is calculated by comparing the test taker's ratings against a benchmark rating for each indicator. The benchmark ratings are derived from the average of a team of expert raters' scores. There are passing metrics embedded into the programming of this assessment.

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.

Directions for Completing the Test

Directions for completing the assessment are described briefly in the steps below:

1. Log into EE PASS with your username and password.

   Note: You should have previously received an email invite to this portal. In that email you were provided with a username and password and notification that you have 72 hours from when the invite email hits your inbox to accept the invitation and set your password. If you try to do this later than that, the link will have expired. At that point, the only way to set your password is to contact support@niet.org. .
2. From the MENU of choices listed, select **Online Certification** and then Teacher Evaluator Certification
3. Observe a Lesson: You will be asked to watch an entire video recorded lesson. Please note that you may pause the video momentarily, but it is required to view the entire video in order to evaluate it.
4. Evaluate the Lesson: Having completed watching the video, you are now ready to evaluate/score the lesson. When you click the NEXT button, you will be presented with the Instruction Domain of the NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric. Select the performance

level for each indicator based on your assessment of the viewed lesson. Once you complete your scoring and click NEXT, your ratings of the indicators are compared to the national raters' scores. You will be informed of your pass/fail status on Part 1 of the assessment. When you receive a passing score, you are prompted to continue to Part 2: Post Conference component of the assessment.

5. In the Part 2 component of the assessment, you will be presented a series of questions regarding the post conference process and your understanding of the rubric. Upon successful completion of this step, you will be presented an opportunity to print your Evaluator Certification certificate.

If You Do Not Pass

If you do not successfully complete either portion of the process, you can retake the test after the set "waiting period" has passed. To find out what your "waiting period" is, you may have to contact your district/university's point of contact on evaluator/observer certification or email us at support@niet.org. You are encouraged to take advantage of online and printed resources to prepare for the next opportunity or to reach out to your district/university's point of contact on evaluator/observer certification for a more formal feedback/support session. There is a maximum amount of interactions with the testing materials allowed before you are locked out of the system. "Interactions" count as starting the test and then either failing, stopping the test in any fashion, or clicking away from the certification process AFTER you had begun.

If You Have Technical Difficulty

Try the following trouble-shooting tips:

1. Check that your web browser is the most up-to-date version. To ensure that the web browser you are using the most up-to-date version by visiting the below link while current in your default web browser: http://www.whatbrowser.org
2. If you believe you have a pop-up blocker issue, please try the following tips:

   Firefox

   a. Click on the Open Menu button (three horizontal bars, located in the top right corner of the browser), then select Options; for Mac, start from the Firefox menu under the Finder and select Preferences. OR use the Tools menu by pressing F10 or the ALT key.
   b. Click the Content tab.
   c. The checkbox listed is Block pop-up windows; across from that click the Exceptions box.
   d. Enter teachfortexas.org and click Allow, then OK (if applicable).

   Safari

   a. From the Safari menu, choose Preferences, and click the Security tab.
   b. Ensure the Block pop-up windows option is not checked. Unchecking this option will allow pop-ups.
   c. To block pop-ups once again, check the Block pop-up windows checkbox.

   Chrome

   a. Find a page that has pop-ups blocked for you.
   b. At the end of the address bar, click on the pop-up blocker icon.
   c. Click the link for the pop-up window you'd like to see.
   d. To always see pop-ups for www.eepass.org, select "Always show pop-ups from www.eepass.org."
3. Finally, if you believe the issue is that your Adobe Flash Player needs to be updated, please follow the following steps:

a. Please ensure that you have downloaded the latest version of Adobe Flash Player http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer
b. Once you have downloaded Adobe Flash Player, you need to refresh the page by holding Control and clicking F5 in order for the browser to recognize that Flash has been installed.

If you are still experiencing technology issues, please contact us at support@niet.org or call us at (479)249-8091. Our support team responds to user requests Monday – Friday 8:30 am CST – 5:30pm CST. Should you need support outside those hours please contact us so that we can see how we might be able to accommodate you.

A detailed online assessment guidebook, *EE PASS Online Techer Evaluator Certification Guidebook*, is available in EE PASS. The guidebook is divided into two main sections. Section 1, *Evaluator Perspective*, provides prospective teacher evaluators with information regarding the online certification assessment format and structure, as well as with suggestions for what might be done before, during, and after the online evaluator certification assessment. Section 2, *School Site and District/System Perspective*, offers items and issues for consideration by district/system leaders relative to teacher evaluation certification protocols, timelines, and follow-up support. In addition, the appendix includes a glossary of terms and additional resources for both individuals and districts involved in the NIET teacher evaluator certification process.

Individuals are strongly encouraged to review the *EE PASS Online Techer Evaluator Certification Guidebook* prior to initiating the assessment. To find the guidebook, log in to EE PASS. From the MENU options, select Content Library. From the Content Library options, select Document Library. From the Document Library options, select Handbooks/Guides. You will find the guidebook there under the title Teacher Evaluator. You can also access tutorials that will visually lead you through the certification process. These tutorials are available in the Content Library/How to Tutorials section; search "Teacher Evaluator."

Pre-Conference

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.

General Tips

- ✓ Below are pre-conference tips based on conferencing best practices.
- ✓ 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?
- How is this lesson connected to what your students have learned in the past?
- Where in the lesson will instruction be differentiated to address the students' varying learning needs (enrichment and/or intervention)?
- How did you decide on your instructional grouping?
- How will you and your students know they have mastered the objective by the end of the lesson? What will be evidence of this mastery?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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?

Pre-Conference Template (sample)

Evaluator: Teacher: Date:

Conference Introduction/Greeting
Greeting/Set the tone:
Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I'm really looking forward to coming in to your class on _____.
Establish the length of the conference:
This conference should take us about _____.
Review conference process and purpose.
…and the purpose of this pre-conference is for you to have the opportunity to walk me through your lesson plan, student data, and provide a general idea about what I can expect to see happen during your lesson.
Ask a general impression question: **Examples:** Are there specific indicators that you focused on when developing this lesson? How does your analysis of your student data/student work impact this lesson?
Walk me through your lesson.
Possible general questions to ask during the pre-conference:
How is this lesson connected to what your students have learned in the past?
Where in the lesson will instruction be differentiated to address the students' varying learning needs (enrichment and/or intervention)?
How did you decide on your instructional grouping?
How will you and your students know they have mastered the objective by the end of the lesson? What will be evidence of this mastery?
Following your lesson and we sort your students' work what will be the criteria you will use to sort your students' work? How will you communicate/share these criteria with your students?

Post-Conference

While the NIET Teaching and Learning 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 the earlier section of this handbook, *Indicator Explanations and Examples* (pp 14-88).

The post-conference is a critical component of the NIET observation/evaluation process. Effective post-conferences are the foundation for teacher growth that impacts student achievement. This section on post conferences will highlight:

- Hints & Questions for Choosing Reinforcement and Refinement Objectives
- Post Conference Plan Format & Components
- Post Conference Scoring Rubric
- Teacher Observation Report Template

Hints and Questions for Choosing Reinforcement and Refinement Objectives

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.

- ✓ 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.

Post-Conference Planning Sheet

Below is a format for developing an effective post-conference. It is important to note that **a post-conference does <u>not</u> 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. The Post-Conference consists of three major sections: Introduction, Reinforcement Plan, and Refinement Plan.

<u>Conference Introduction/Greeting</u>

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?"
5. **Analyze student work samples** with teacher to identify strengths.

<u>Reinforcement Plan</u>

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. **Questions for Teacher Reflection.** 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 "*Indicator Explanations and Examples*" 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. Evidence should include both student evidence and teacher evidence.
   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. **Transition to Refinement Question.**
   Example. ""Based on your analysis of student work, what would you change about the lesson and why?"
3. **Questions for Teacher Reflection.** 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 "*Indicator Explanations and Examples*" for additional examples of coaching questions).
4. **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. Evidence should include both student evidence and teacher evidence.
   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. **Recommended Actions & Guided Practice.** 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. **Closing.** Restate the area of refinement and reinforcement. Share ratings. Sign documentation. Make a closing statement.

Post Conference Planning Sheet

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Name: Subject:
Date:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">CONFERENCE INTRODUCTION/GREETING</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">✓ Greeting/set the tone.
✓ Establish the length of the conference.
✓ Review the process.
✓ Purpose is to reflect on the lesson observed and to focus on best practice professional development. We will reflect on a strength of the lesson observed (area of reinforcement).
✓ We will then identify an area of refinement we want to strengthen, an area that could have extended student learning.
✓ Ask a general question.
(e.g., “Based on your student work analysis how do you think the lesson went?”
✓ Analyze student work samples with teacher to identify strengths.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">REINFORCEMENT PLAN:
Objective:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Questions for Teacher Reflection:</td><td>Evidence from Lesson That Indicates Support of Student Learning (at least 3 examples):

Student Evidence:

Teacher Evidence:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">REFINEMENT PLAN
Objective:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Transition to Refinement Question:
(e.g., “Based on your analysis of student work, what would you change about the lesson and why?”)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Questions for Teacher Reflection:</td><td>Evidence from Lesson That Indicates Support of Student Learning (at least 3 examples):

Student Evidence:

Teacher Evidence:</td></tr>
</table>

Recommended Action: Guided Practice:
CLOSING
✓ Restate area of refinement and reinforcement ✓ Share ratings ✓ Sign documentation ✓ Closing statement

Post Conference Scoring Rubric

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

	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	At Expectation (3)	Significantly Below Expectations (1)
Reinforcement Objective	• Includes a timeline and observable action for area of strength • Narrows the focus to an indicator and descriptor that was a strength • Includes significant positive impact on student learning	• Includes an observable action for area of strength • Narrows the focus to an indicator that was a strength • Includes positive impact on student learning	• Objective is not actionable • Scope of objective is broad • Objective does not include impact on student learning.
Reinforcement Area	• Identifies the indicator where the teacher is most accomplished. • Utilizes language from the Instruction Domain • Makes intentional and explicit connections to other indicators and the impact on student achievement in the reinforcement area	• Identifies an indicator where the teacher is as Expectations • Utilizes some language from the Instruction Domain • Make connections to other indicators and the impact on student achievement in the reinforcement area	• Identifies an indicator where the teacher is not at Expectations • Reinforcement area is ambiguous
Reinforcement Self-Analysis Questions	• Open ended questions that focus on the reinforcement area • Questions use language explicitly tied to the Instruction indicator to be reinforced • Questions are sequenced from general to specific • Questions prompt teacher reflection on the connection between teaching practice and student learning with intentional connections to student work	• Questions focus on the reinforcement area • Questions use some language from the instruction indicator to be reinforced • Mixture of general and specific questions • Questions prompt teacher reflection	• Questions are not well focused on the reinforcement area • Questions do not provide language connected to the instruction indicator • Questions are limited in scope and do not prompt teacher reflection
Reinforcement Evidence	• Evidence clearly exhibits the teacher's strength by explicitly integrating specific examples of teacher and student evidence from the observed lesson • Evidence clearly shows impact on student learning in reinforcement area	• Evidence identifies the teacher's strengths by providing some examples of teacher and student evidence from the observed lesson. • Evidence shows impact on student learning in reinforcement area	• Evidence identifies an incorrect area of strength • Evidence does not support reinforcement area
Refinement Objective	• Includes a timeline and observable action for area of growth • Narrows the focus to an indicator and descriptor that is a need • Includes significant impact on student learning when addressed	• Includes an observable action for area of growth • Narrows the focus to an indicator that is a need • Includes potential impact on student learning when addressed	• Objective is not actionable • Scope of objective is broad • Objective does not include impact on student learning.

Refinement Area	• Identifies the major area of weakness • Refinement area is unambiguous, explicit, and utilizes the language from the Instruction Domain • Makes intentional and explicit connections to other indicators and the impact on student achievement in the refinement area	• Identifies an area of weakness • Refinement area utilizes the language from the Instruction Domain • Make connections to other indicators and the impact on student achievement in the refinement area	• Does not address a needed area of improvement • Refinement area is ambiguous
Refinement Self-Analysis Questions	• Open ended questions that focus on the refinement area • Questions use language explicitly tied to the Instruction indicator to be refined • Questions are sequenced from general to specific • Questions prompt teacher reflection on the connection between teaching practice and student learning with intentional connections to student work	• Questions focus on the refinement area • Questions use some language from the instruction indicator to be refined • Mixture of general and specific questions • Questions prompt teacher reflection	• Questions are not well focused on the refinement area • Questions do not provide language connected to the instruction indicator • Questions are limited in scope and do not prompt teacher reflection
Refinement Evidence	• Evidence clearly exhibits the teacher's area of improvement by explicitly integrating specific examples of teacher and student evidence from the observed lesson • All evidence clearly shows impact on student learning in refinement area	• Evidence identifies the teacher's area of improvement by providing some examples of teacher and student evidence from the observed lesson. • Evidence shows impact on student learning in refinement area	• Evidence identifies an incorrect area of improvement • Evidence does not support area of improvement
Recommended Action	Recommendations are: • Clear, appropriate, and measurable aligned to the indicator and descriptor targeted to the questions and objective for the refinement area • Aligns to the teacher's knowledge and skill level • Promotes success with realistic and manageable expectations • Incorporates the potential impact on students	Recommendations are: • Appropriate, and aligned to the indicator and descriptor targeted to the questions and objective for the refinement area • Aligns to the teacher's knowledge and skill level • Promotes success with manageable expectations • Incorporates the potential impact on students	Recommendations are: • Absent, vague, and inappropriate, unrelated to identified refinement area • Do not align to the teacher's knowledge and skill level • Expectations are not manageable • Lacks potential impact on students
Guided Practice	• Open ended question prompting the teacher to reflect on application of the recommended action in a future lesson	• Question prompting the teacher to reflect on the application of the recommended action	• Does not include a reflective question prompting the teacher to reflect on the application of the recommended action.

Teacher Observation Report Template

Observer _____ ☐Announced ☐Unannounced

Teacher Observed _____ Date _____ Time _____

School Name _____ Observation Number _____

Planning	**Observer Score**	**Self-Score**
Instructional Plans (IP)		
Student Work (SW)		
Assessment (AS)		
Environment	**Observer Score**	**Self-Score**
Expectations (ES)		
Engaging Students & Managing Student Behavior (ESMB)		
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

Appendix F: Professionalism/Responsibilities Domain

The NIET Teaching and Learning Standards include four key domains: Instruction, Planning, Environment, Professionalism/Responsibilities. Regularly scheduled observations, evaluations, and post conference generally speak to the instruction, planning, and environment domains. The Professionalism/Responsibilities domain is typically addressed through an annual survey/evaluation. Within the NIET Educator Effectiveness Preparation and Support System (EE PASS), partners will utilize either the TAP Responsibilities Survey or Professionalism Survey.

PROFESSIONALISM DOMAIN				
Performance Standard		**Significantly Above Expectations (5) (Exemplary)**	**At Expectations (3) (Proficient)**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1) (Unsatisfactory)**
Growing and Developing Professionally	The educator is prompt, prepared, and participates in professional development meetings, bringing student artifacts (student work) when requested.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	The educator appropriately attempts to implement new learning in the classroom following presentation in professional development meetings.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	The educator develops and works on a yearly plan for new learning based on analyses of school improvement plans and new goals, self-assessment, and input from the teacher leader and principal observations.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	The educator selects specific activities, content knowledge, or pedagogical skills to enhance and improve his/her proficiency.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
Reflecting on Teaching	The educator makes thoughtful and accurate assessments of his/her lessons' effectiveness as evidenced by the self-reflection after each observation.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	The educator offers specific actions to improve his/her teaching.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	The educator accepts responsibilities contributing to school improvement.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
	The educator utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional decisions.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
Community Involvement	The educator actively supports school activities and events.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely
School Responsibilities	The educator accepts leadership responsibility and/or assists peers in contributing to a safe and orderly school environment.	Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely

TAP RESPONSIBILITIES SURVEYS

The TAP system requires a teacher career path component comprised of master teachers, mentor teachers and career teachers. This career path distributes school and instructional leadership and creates different job expectations and responsibilities for different types of teachers. Master teachers have responsibilities and job expectations in addition to those of career teachers. The same is true for mentor teachers, but on a lesser scale than master teachers. In addition, there are certain responsibilities for career teachers in schools implementing TAP. For this reason, responsibilities performance standards were established for master, mentor and career teachers to document areas and levels of effectiveness and provide benchmarks of performance. These aggregated responsibilities scores are included in the SKR portion of the TAP performance rating.

Surveys for career, mentor and master teachers are provided on the following pages.

Career Teacher Survey	
Teacher Surveyed:	Teacher Role: Career Teacher
Surveyed By:	Survey Date:
School:	Survey Type:
Entered By:	

Regularly	--	Sometimes	--	Rarely
5	4	3	2	1

Growing and Developing Professionally	Rating
1. The career teacher is prompt, prepared, and participates in cluster meetings, bringing student artifacts (student work) when requested.	
2. The career teacher appropriately attempts to implement new learning in the classroom following presentation in cluster.	
3. The career teacher develops and works on a yearly plan for new learning based on analyses of school improvement plans and new goals, self-assessment, and input from the master/mentor teacher and principal observations.	
4. The career teacher selects specific activities, content knowledge, or pedagogical skills to enhance and improve his/her proficiency.	

Reflecting on Teaching	Rating
5. The career teacher makes thoughtful and accurate assessments of his/her lessons' effectiveness as evidenced by the self-reflection after each observation.	
6. The career teacher offers specific actions to improve his/her teaching.	
7. The career teacher accepts responsibilities contributing to school improvement.	
8. The teacher utilizes student achievement data to address strengths and weaknesses of students and guide instructional decisions.	

Comments (optional, and not part of the score):

Mentor Teacher Survey	
Teacher Surveyed:	Teacher Role: Mentor Teacher
Surveyed By:	Survey Date:
School:	Survey Type:
Entered By:	

PLEASE NOTE: Career Teachers are to respond to items #1-11 only.

Regularly	--	Sometimes	--	Rarely
5	4	3	2	1

Staff Development	Rating
1. The mentor teacher assists the design and delivery of professional development activities for his/her cluster group as needed.	
2. The mentor teacher provides follow-up (e.g. observations, team teaching, and/or demonstration lessons) that supports/models how to use the ideas and activities learned in cluster.	
3. The mentor teacher is a resource, providing access to materials and research based instructional methods to his/her cluster group and/or mentee.	
4. The mentor teacher works closely with cluster team members to plan instruction and assessments during cluster development time.	

Instructional Supervision	Rating
5. The mentor teacher advances the career teacher's knowledge of state and district content standards and the TAP teaching rubrics.	
6. The mentor teacher's feedback during coaching specifically defines the areas of reinforcement and refinement.	

Mentoring	Rating
7. The mentor teacher provides opportunities/support for the career teacher/mentee through team planning and team teaching.	
8. The mentor teacher serves as a resource for curriculum, assessment, instructional, and classroom management strategies and resources.	
9. The mentor teacher guides and coaches career teachers/mentees in the development of their growth plans.	
10. The mentor teacher observes and coaches mentees and/or career teachers to improve their instruction and align it with the TAP Rubrics.	

Community Involvement	Rating
11. The mentor teacher actively supports school activities and events.	

School Responsibilities	Rating
12. The mentor teacher participates and supports the analysis of school achievement data to isolate school strengths and weaknesses in order to make suggestions for improvement.	
13. The mentor teacher accepts leadership responsibilities and/or assists peers in contributing to a safe and orderly school environment.	
14. The mentor teacher participates in the setting of school and cluster goals.	
15. The mentor teacher communicates and reflects the visions and decisions of the TAP Leadership Team.	
16. The mentor teacher supports the master teacher during development time in cluster meetings by providing individual support to career teachers.	

Growing and Developing Professionally	Rating
17. The mentor teacher develops a yearly plan/Individual Growth Plan for new learning based on analyses of school improvement plans and goals, self-assessment, and input from master teacher and principal observations.	
18. The mentor teacher selects targeted content knowledge and pedagogical skills to enhance and improve his/her knowledge.	

Reflecting on Teaching	Rating
19. The mentor teacher makes thoughtful and accurate assessments of his/her lessons' effectiveness and the extent to which they achieved their goals.	
20. The mentor teacher considers strengths and weaknesses, as well as personal and cultural differences, of adult learners as evidenced in his/her communications and actions that promote effective teaching with all cluster members.	
21. The mentor teacher provides specific actions to improve his/her teaching.	

Comments (optional, and not part of the score):

Master Teacher Survey	
Teacher Surveyed:	Teacher Role: Master Teacher
Surveyed By:	Survey Date:
School:	Survey Type:
Entered By:	

PLEASE NOTE: Career Teachers are to respond to items #1-13 only.

Regularly	--	Sometimes	--	Rarely
5	4	3	2	1

Staff Development	Rating
1. The master teacher leads the design and delivery of research-based professional development activities for his or her cluster group.	
2. The master teacher consistently presents new learning in cluster that is supported with field tested evidence of increased student achievement.	
3. The master teacher models new learning in cluster meetings and in classrooms throughout the year demonstrating how to effectively implement the skill developed in cluster meetings.	
4. The master teacher is a resource, providing access to materials and research-based instructional methods to his or her cluster group members.	
5. The master teacher works closely with cluster team members to plan instruction and assessments during cluster development time.	
6. The master teacher guides and reviews the cluster members' Individual Growth Plans.	

Instructional Supervision	Rating
7. The master teacher provides specific evidence, feedback and suggestions during coaching identifying areas of reinforcement and refinement.	
8. The master teacher advances the career and mentor teacher's knowledge of state and district content standards and the TAP Rubrics.	

Mentoring	Rating
9. The master teacher observes and guides the mentor teacher's professional relationships and responsibilities to career teachers.	
10. The master teacher guides, supports, and monitors the Individual Growth Plans of career and mentor teachers.	
11. The master teacher identifies resources for career and mentor teachers that enhance instructional planning, assessment design, and classroom management.	
12. The master teacher provides ongoing follow-up and support (e.g. demonstration lessons, team teaching, observations with feedback) to career and mentor teachers.	

Community Involvement	Rating
13. The master teacher actively supports school activities and events.	

School Responsibilities	Rating
14. The master teacher works with other leadership team members in developing appropriate school and cluster plans to target student academic and teacher instructional needs.	
15. The master teacher leads and supports the analysis of school and student achievement data to identify strengths and weaknesses and make suggestions for improvement.	
16. The master teacher communicates and reflects the visions and decisions of the TAP Leadership Team.	
17. The master teacher assists the administrators in inducting new teachers into the TAP school environment and processes.	

Growing and Developing Professionally	Rating
18. The master teacher develops and works on his/her Individual Growth Plan which includes new learning based on school goals, self-assessment, and feedback from observations.	
19. The master teacher includes activities on his/her IGP to enhance content knowledge or pedagogical skills in order to increase his/her proficiency.	

Reflecting on Teaching	Rating
20. The master teacher thoughtfully assesses the effectiveness of his/her instruction, as evidenced in cluster by the new learning modeled and the student work presented from his/her field-tests.	
21. The master teacher considers the varied strengths and weaknesses and personal/cultural differences of adult learners through communications and actions that promote effective teaching with all cluster members.	
22. The master teacher plans, offers, and implements specific alternative actions to improve teaching.	

Comments (optional, and not part of the score):