

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4a: Reflecting on Teaching

Many educators, as well as researchers, believe that the ability to reflect on teaching is the mark of a true professional. Through reflection, real growth and therefore excellence are possible. By trying to understand the consequences of actions and by contemplating alternative courses of action, teachers expand their repertoire of practice.

Reflection on teaching includes the thinking that follows any instructional event. During that follow-up thinking, teachers consider if their goals were met and if a lesson “worked.” Sensitivity to the engagement of students – both in quantity and quality – helps teachers know to what extent the approach would have been more effective. Of course, judgments of effectiveness are related to the quality of subsequent student participation and students’ success on assessments, which may not be known for several days.

With experience, teachers become more discerning and can evaluate their successes as well as their errors. Accuracy in these judgments helps teachers refine their approach the next time, and improve their practice. This constant improvement is the consequence of reflection, enabling teachers to focus on those aspects of their teaching that can be strengthened.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE:

- Teacher maintains reflection sheets.
- Teacher keeps a professional journal.
- Teacher maintains a dialogue with other professional educators.
- Teacher participates in peer coaching.

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Accuracy	Teacher does not know if a lesson was effective or achieved its goals, or profoundly misjudges the success of a lesson.	Teacher has a generally accurate impression of a lesson’s effectiveness and the extent to which instructional goals were met.	Teacher makes an accurate assessment of a lesson’s effectiveness and the extent to which it achieved its goals and can cite general references to support the judgment.	Teacher makes a thoughtful and accurate assessment of a lesson’s effectiveness and the extent to which it achieved its goals, citing many specific examples from the lesson and weighing the relative strength of each.

Use in Future Teaching	Teacher has no suggestions for how a lesson may be improved another time.	Teacher makes general suggestions about how a lesson may be improved.	Teacher makes a few specific suggestions of what he/she may try another time.	Drawing on an extensive repertoire of skills, the teacher offers specific alternative actions, complete with probable successes of different approaches.
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Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

Teachers need to keep accurate records. Such records enable teachers to respond to individual needs.

A well-designed system for monitoring assignments enables both teachers and students to know at all times which assignments are due, which have been completed, and which are still outstanding.

Teachers must also keep track of student learning so that they know which parts of the curriculum students have learned and which are still awaiting understanding. A system for monitoring student progress must align with a teacher’s approach to assessment (Component 1f). For example, if performance tasks are used to evaluate student understanding, then the records must include the level of student success on those tasks and provide the information for feedback to students (Component 3d). Similarly, records of student progress enable a teacher to provide information to families (Component 4c).

Records must be maintained on the non-instructional activities that are essential to a school’s smooth operation, such as which students have returned their permission slips for a field trip. Teachers are also required to complete certain paperwork, such as inventories and ordering supplies, in an accurate and timely fashion.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE:

- Teacher maintains appropriate reports.
- Teacher records student assessments.
- Teacher maintains an assignment checklist.
- Teacher records grades on report cards.
- Teacher creates budget documents.
- Teacher updates grade book (Infinite Campus) as required.
- Teacher performs non-instructional duties (i.e., field trips, lunch count, fluoride distribution, etc.)

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Student Completion of Assignments	Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments is in disarray.	Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments is rudimentary and only partially effective.	Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments is fully effective.	Teacher’s system for maintaining information on student completion of assignments is fully effective. Students participate in the maintenance of records.

Student Progress in Learning	Teacher has no system for maintaining information on student progress in learning, or the system is in disarray.	Teacher's system for maintaining information on student progress in learning is rudimentary and partially effective.	Teacher's system for maintaining information on student progress in learning is effective.	Teacher's system for maintaining information on student progress in learning is fully effective. Students contribute information and interpretation of the records.
Non-instructional Records	Teacher's records for non-instructional activities are in disarray, resulting in errors and confusion.	Teacher's records for non-instructional activities are adequate, but they require frequent monitoring to avoid error.	Teacher's system for maintaining information on non-instructional activities is fully effective.	Teacher's system for maintaining information on non-instructional activities is highly effective, and students contribute to its maintenance.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4c: Communicating with Families

Educators have long recognized that when they can enlist the participation of students' families in the educational process, student learning is enhanced.

Communication with families involves keeping them informed of events in a class, as well as procedures and grading systems. Such communication is especially important when teachers use approaches that may be unfamiliar to parents. Many vehicles are useful for such communication. Teachers may send home a regular newsletter or periodic information on upcoming school and classroom events.

In addition, teachers must keep parents informed about the academic and social progress of their children. Communicating honestly with parents about their children's learning is essential for teachers. Communication with families about individual students must be two-way and occur at times of success as well as when a student is experiencing difficulty.

Many teachers find ways to engage parents in the actual instructional program. Even though this area of communicating with families varies with the age of the students and the subjects taught, much communication is possible. Most teachers find that when they can engage the families in the actual learning process, all areas of communication are improved.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE:

- Teacher provides newsletters.
- Teacher maintains a school-related web site.
- Teacher provides a family contact log.
- Teacher provides progress reports (Infinite Campus).
- Teacher sends informative notes home.

- ❑ Teacher provides family activities for home.
- ❑ Teacher responds to phone calls, emails, and other correspondence in a timely manner.

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Information About the Instructional Program	Teacher provides little information about the instructional program to families.	Teacher participates in the school’s activities for parent communication but offers little additional information.	Teacher provides frequent information to parents, as appropriate, about the instructional program.	Teacher provides frequent information to parents, as appropriate, about the instructional program. Students participate in preparing materials for their families.
Information About Individual Students	Teacher provides minimal information to parents and does not respond or responds insensitively to parent concerns about students.	Teacher adheres to the school’s required procedures for communicating to parents. Responses to parent concerns are minimal.	Teacher communicates with parents about students’ progress on a regular basis and is available as needed to respond to parent concerns.	Teacher provides information to parents frequently on both positive and negative aspects of student progress. Response to parent concerns is handled with great sensitivity.
Engagement of Families in the Instructional Program	Teacher makes no attempt to engage families in the instructional program, or such attempts are inappropriate.	Teacher makes modest and inconsistently successful attempts to engage families in the instructional program.	Teacher’s efforts to engage families in the instructional program are frequent and successful.	Teacher’s efforts to engage families in the instructional program are frequent and successful. Students contribute ideas for projects that will be enhanced by family participation.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4d: Contributing to the School and District

Most teachers’ duties extend beyond their classroom doors. Educators, either by contractual agreement or by a sense of professional responsibility, find that their days contain such activities as committee meetings, co-curricular commitments, family involvement activities, etc. These individuals have extensive and highly professional relationships with their colleagues, and the fabric of the school is one of mutual support and enhancement.

Relationships with colleagues are an important element of teachers' contributions to the school and district. Professional educators are generous with their expertise and willingly share materials and insights, particularly with those less experienced.

Colleagues are supportive of each other and respect differences of opinion. The focus of their work is the well-being of students, and they collaborate with colleagues for that reason. Professional educators make many contributions to the life of a school. In all schools, many opportunities exist for educators to assume additional responsibilities, thereby enhancing the culture of the entire school.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE:

- Teacher shares materials with colleagues.
- Teacher mentors less-experienced colleagues.
- Teacher serves on or leads committees.
- Teacher participates in interdisciplinary meetings.
- Teacher attends extra-curricular/co-curricular functions.
- Teacher attends school/community functions.
- Teacher assumes leadership in school/district.

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Relationships with Colleagues	Teacher's relationships with colleagues are negative or self-serving.	Teacher maintains cordial relationships with colleagues to fulfill the duties that the school or district requires.	Support and cooperation characterize relationships with colleagues.	Support and cooperation characterize relationships with colleagues. Teacher takes initiative in assuming leadership among the faculty.
Service to the School	Teacher avoids becoming involved in school events.	Teacher participates in school events when specifically asked.	Teacher volunteers to participate in school events, making a substantial contribution.	Teacher volunteers to participate in school events, making a substantial contribution, and assumes a leadership role in at least some aspect of school life.
Participation in School and District Projects	Teacher avoids becoming involved in school and district projects.	Teacher participates in school and district projects when specifically asked.	Teacher volunteers to participate in school and district projects, making a substantial contribution.	Teacher volunteers to participate in school and district projects, making a substantial contribution, and assumes a leadership role in a major school or district project.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

Continuing development is the mark of a true professional, an ongoing effort that is never completed. Educators committed to attaining and remaining at the top of their profession invest much energy in staying informed and increasing their skills. They are then in a position to exercise leadership among colleagues.

Content knowledge is one area where educators can grow and develop professionally. Superficial content knowledge is insufficient for good teaching; deeper understanding is essential. Continuing education is needed to stay abreast of the latest developments.

Developments in pedagogy create opportunities for educators to continually improve their practice. Educational research discovers new methods to engage students in learning. Most teachers can profit from focusing on the latest work in pedagogical research and its applications to classroom practice. Expanding developments in information technology are yet another area for intense professional development.

Professional organizations are an important vehicle for informing educators. Journals written in the language of the practitioner are valuable resources. Conferences, particularly regional ones, are within the reach of most communities. Teachers committed to expanding their professional knowledge will undertake serious study of their students' learning, and find ways to share their findings with colleagues.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE:

- Teacher mentors less-experienced colleagues.
- Teacher maintains professional membership in appropriate organizations.
- Teacher attends in-service training.
- Teacher mentors student teachers.
- Teacher establishes professional goals.
- Teacher continues professional development through university coursework.
- Teacher participates in professional book studies and learning communities.

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Enhancement of Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skill	Teacher engages in no professional development activities to enhance knowledge or skill.	Teacher participates in professional activities to a limited extent when they are convenient.	Teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skill.	Teacher seeks out opportunities for professional development and makes a systematic attempt to conduct action research in his/her classroom.
Service to the Profession	Teacher makes no effort to share knowledge with others or to assume professional responsibilities.	Teacher finds limited ways to contribute to the profession.	Teacher participates actively in assisting other educators.	Teacher initiates important activities to contribute to the profession, such as mentoring new teachers, writing articles for publication, and making presentations.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4f: Showing Professionalism

“Professionalism” is an elusive concept that permeates all aspects of a teacher’s work. In addition to their technical skills in planning and implementing the instructional program, accomplished teachers display certain professional qualities that help them to serve their students and their profession.

First, highly professional teachers care deeply for the well-being of their students and step in on their behalf when needed. They are aware of, and alert to, the signs of physical and/or emotional abuse and drug and alcohol abuse.

Second, educators are advocates for their students, particularly those whom the education establishment has traditionally underserved. They work diligently for their students’ best interests, whether that means convincing a colleague that a student deserves an opportunity or supporting a student’s efforts at self-improvement.

Third, highly professional teachers demonstrate a commitment to professional standards in problem solving and decision making. Professional educators maintain an open mind and are willing to attempt new approaches to old problems. They base their judgments and recommendations on hard information rather than on hearsay and tradition. They strive to use the best data available to support action.

POSSIBLE EVIDENCE:

- Teacher understands the process of mandatory reporting.
- Teacher makes use of available resources (i.e., family resource center, BAT, SPED needs, Title I, Voyagers, GT, etc.)
- Teacher is a student advocate.
- Teacher interacts with others in a professional, authentic way.
- Teacher collaborates with colleagues.

Element	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Service to Students	Teacher is not alert to students’ needs.	Teacher’s attempts to serve students are inconsistent.	Teacher is moderately active in serving students.	Teacher is highly proactive in serving students, seeking out resources when necessary.
Advocacy	Teacher contributes to school practices that result in some students being ill served by the school.	Teacher does not knowingly contribute to some students being ill served by the school.	Teacher works within the context of a particular team or department to ensure that all students receive a fair opportunity to succeed.	Teacher makes a particular effort to challenge negative attitudes and helps ensure that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, are honored in the school.

Decision Making	Teacher makes decisions based on self-serving interests.	Teacher's decisions are based on limited though genuinely professional considerations.	Teacher maintains an open mind and participates in team or departmental decision-making.	Teacher takes a leadership role in team or departmental decision-making and helps ensure that such decisions are based on the highest professional standards.
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July, 2007