
Foundational Skills and Competencies

I. TEACHERS HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF:

Students

1. Teachers understand how students learn and develop.
2. Teachers understand how students differ in their approaches to learning.

Content

3. Teachers are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. Teachers understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) they teach.

Pedagogy

5. Teachers know how to design and deliver instruction.
 6. Teachers recognize the need to vary their instructional methods.
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II. TEACHERS APPLY THIS KNOWLEDGE BY:

Planning

1. Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum and the community.
2. Teachers select and/or create learning tasks that make subject matter meaningful to students.

Instructing

3. Teachers establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment that shows a commitment to students and their successes.
4. Teachers create instructional opportunities that support students' academic, social and personal development.
5. Teachers use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which foster individual and collaborative inquiry.
6. Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems and demonstrate skills.

Assessing and Adjusting

7. Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate.
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III. TEACHERS DEMONSTRATE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH:

Professional and Ethical Practice

1. Teachers conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (Section 10-145d-400a of the Connecticut Certification Regulations).
2. Teachers share responsibility for student achievement and well-being.

Reflection and Continuous Learning

3. Teachers continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community.
4. Teachers seek out opportunities to grow professionally.

Leadership and Collaboration

5. Teachers serve as leaders in the school community.
 6. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to their students and a passion for improving their profession.
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The following sections explain more fully what each standard means in terms of critical knowledge, skills and abilities. The more detailed description of these standards is intended to encourage professional discussion of effective teaching and administration. Moreover, it should communicate expectations for professional practice to prospective teachers, practicing teachers, principals, school administrators and individuals who prepare teachers.

It is important to note, however, that this document must not be taken verbatim as a checklist or an evaluation/assessment instrument to be used to evaluate individual teachers. Expectations for the demonstration of these competencies will vary depending upon the experience level of the teacher, whether in the pre-service phase, during the initial years in the profession or during the years of experience as a veteran educator. Any assessment or evaluation instrument developed on the basis of the CCT must reflect these different expectations, as well as the use for which it is intended (e.g., for recommendation for initial licensure by an institution of higher education, for licensing by the state as part of the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program, or as a basis for local district evaluation of the nontenured or tenured teacher).

All school districts must develop their own teacher evaluation and professional development plans that address the competencies identified in the CCT. However, those plans also must take into account district and schoolwide learning goals and provide for the appropriate training of teachers and administrators about the evaluation criteria established by local school districts.

<p>I. Teachers have knowledge of: Students Content Pedagogy</p>

Students⁴

1. *Teachers understand how students learn and develop by:*
 - a. becoming knowledgeable about the major concepts, principles, theories and research related to the normal progression and variations in students' physical, emotional and cognitive development to construct learning opportunities that support students' development, acquisition of knowledge and motivation; and
 - b. learning about exceptionalities in learning – including learning differences, visual and perceptual differences, socio-emotional differences, special physical or mental challenges, and gifted and talented exceptionalities – and challenging students with exceptionality as well as seeking sources of support within the school.

2. *Teachers understand how students differ in their approaches to learning by:*
 - a. being aware of how student learning is influenced by language, culture, heritage, family and community values and incorporating students' experiences and community resources into instruction;
 - b. learning about and utilizing strategies for building understanding, acceptance and a positive sense of community into the classroom; and
 - c. becoming knowledgeable about language development, including the process of second-language acquisition, and employing strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English.

⁴Students include children, adolescents and adults served by the public school system.

Content

3. *Teachers are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics*⁵.
4. *Teachers understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) they teach by:*
 - a. becoming knowledgeable about the major principles and concepts of the subject to be taught⁶ and presenting appropriate lesson content;
 - b. learning about and using computer and information technology as an integral part of teaching their discipline(s);
 - c. knowing and utilizing national and state standards within their discipline(s);
 - d. being aware of the evolving nature of subject-matter knowledge and the need for keeping abreast of new ideas and understandings within one's discipline, including the impact of technology and information sources on the nature of teaching, communications and the development of knowledge;
 - e. understanding that literacy skills and processes are applicable in all content areas and helping students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable students to construct meaning and make sense of the world through reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing; and
 - f. understanding and using concepts and skills inherent in numeracy to enable their students to represent physical events, work with data, reason, communicate mathematically, and make connections within their respective content area in order to solve problems.

⁵Essential skills in reading, writing and mathematics are assessed through the PRAXIS I CBT examination.

⁶Content knowledge is assessed through the PRAXIS II content-area examinations.

Pedagogy

5. *Teachers know how to design and deliver instruction by:*
 - a. understanding that the specific content taught is part of and connected to a larger universe of knowledge represented in a K-12 curriculum;
 - b. recognizing the importance of focusing and sequencing curricular objectives to connect with students' previous and future learning and to prepare students to master state and local achievement goals; and
 - c. choosing when and how to expand beyond the articulated curriculum to meet student needs and to make connections among different subjects and among school, career and work.

6. *Teachers recognize the need to vary their instructional methods by:*
 - a. recognizing individual differences in approaches to learning and identifying how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment; and
 - b. varying their role (e.g., instructor, facilitator, coach and audience) in the instructional process in relation to the content and purposes of instruction.

<p>II. Teachers apply this knowledge by: Planning Instructing Assessing and Adjusting</p>

Planning

1. *Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum and the community by:*
 - a. designing instruction and assessment to achieve long- and short-term learning goals that are specific and measurable;
 - b. selecting appropriate materials – including a wide range of technological resources – to help students find information, interpret the quality of sources, and effectively synthesize and communicate information;
 - c. sequencing learning tasks into coherent units of instruction derived from the curriculum and incorporating hands-on, real-world experiences and community resources from which students can build an understanding of abstract concepts and knowledge; and
 - d. anticipating common misperceptions, diverse levels of student interest and available resources, and making adjustments as appropriate.

2. *Teachers create a structure for learning by selecting and/or creating significant learning tasks that make subject matter meaningful to students by:*
 - a. designing tasks that meet curricular goals, build upon students' prior learning, and advance the student toward important learning goals;
 - b. addressing various learning styles, incorporating multicultural content and fostering interdisciplinary connections; and
 - c. making purposeful choices about whether students should work individually or collectively.

Instructing

3. *Teachers establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior and create a positive learning environment that shows a deep commitment to students and their success by:*
 - a. ensuring that standards of behavior are explicit and applying them consistently over time with fitting consequences;
 - b. maximizing the amount of time spent in instruction by effectively managing routines and transitions;
 - c. organizing, allocating and managing resources of time, space, activities and attention to ensure high levels of student engagement and participation;
 - d. establishing high expectations for achievement, promoting shared responsibility for learning, and nurturing the development of ethical and responsible behavior in students;
 - e. demonstrating enthusiasm, self-confidence and caring about the well-being of students;
 - f. structuring student interactions and academic discussions in a nonthreatening, safe⁷ learning environment that supports varied learning and performance styles, student interests, and encourages intellectual risk-taking among learners; and
 - g. using understandings of individual and group motivation to foster students' independent thinking, perseverance and confidence as learners.

4. *Teachers create instructional opportunities to support students' academic, social and personal development by:*
 - a. developing effective lessons by organizing instructional activities and materials to promote achievement of lesson objectives;
 - b. employing techniques that address a variety of learning styles as well as incorporate a wide range of community and technology resources;
 - c. promoting the development of critical and creative thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills and the deeper understanding of concepts; and
 - d. integrating into all curriculums and programs opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate ethical and responsible student behavior.

⁷A "safe" learning environment in the context of science classrooms also implies physical safety. Beginning science teachers' knowledge of laboratory safety practices is assessed through the Science Safety Laboratory Assessment.

Teachers apply this knowledge by . . . (continued)

5. *Teachers use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communications techniques which foster individual and collective inquiry by:*
 - a. communicating clearly, using precise language and acceptable oral and written expressions that convey expectations for students; and
 - b. engaging students in purposeful discourse⁸ by using appropriate questioning strategies – i.e., knowing when to provide information, when to clarify an issue, when to model, when to lead and when to let students struggle with a difficulty.

6. *Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that enable students to think critically, solve problems and demonstrate skills by:*
 - a. becoming familiar with principles and techniques associated with various instructional and assessment strategies, including how to use multiple representations and explanations of concepts; and
 - b. identifying strategies to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful for students, encourage students pursue their own inquiries and interests, and help students make connections between school and career.

⁸Discourse is defined as the purposeful interaction between and among teachers and students, in which ideas are represented, communicated and challenged, with the goal of creating greater meaning or understanding. Discourse can be oral dialogue (conversation), written dialogue (reaction, thoughts, feedback), or visual dialogue (charts, graphs, paintings or images that represent student and teacher thinking/reasoning).

Assessing and Adjusting

7. *Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate by:*
 - a. monitoring student understanding of the lesson at appropriate points and adjusting teaching when necessary;
 - b. reflecting upon and analyzing the process of teaching based on student learning or failure to learn, and modifying future plans and instructional approaches accordingly;
 - c. sharing assessment criteria with students on a regular basis as well as guiding students to use these criteria for self-evaluation;
 - d. collecting data over time by analyzing student work and determining whether or not instructional strategies promote desired student learning outcomes; and
 - e. using multiple sources of data (such as classroom observation, student work, teacher-constructed assessment tasks, standardized test information, state examination student scores or released items, school records, etc.) to examine their students' progress in light of national, state and local performance standards.

III. Teachers demonstrate professional responsibility through:
Professional and Ethical Practice
Reflection and Continuous Learning
Leadership and Collaboration

Professional and Ethical Practice

1. *Teachers conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (Section 10-145d-400a of the Certification Regulations).*
2. *Teachers share responsibility for student achievement and well-being through means such as:*
 - a. working collaboratively with school administrators, colleagues and families to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning;
 - b. involving families of students in the education of their children by keeping them informed about their students' learning and seeking input to support and meet children's needs; and
 - c. identifying appropriate agencies in the larger community, businesses and professional organizations that can provide resources for students, classrooms or schools.

Reflection and Continuous Learning

3. *Teachers continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and actions on students and the school community through means such as:*
 - a. working with administrators and colleagues to explore student work and progress, to examine the effectiveness of instructional strategies, to identify school and program needs based on student data, and to ensure that the collective needs of the school are addressed.
4. *Teachers seek out opportunities to grow professionally through means such as:*
 - a. sharing practices with professional colleagues within the school or district; and
 - b. enriching their knowledge about content, learners, pedagogy, technology and the U.S. public school system through the examination of professional literature, participation in professional organizations, attendance at professional development seminars or ongoing graduate-level course work.

Leadership and Collaboration

5. *Teachers serve as leaders in the school community through means such as:*
 - a. working with colleagues to create a positive, collaborative school culture;
 - b. working with colleagues and/or community leaders to secure community support for students and schools and actively promoting strategies that support the continuous improvement of student learning; and
 - c. working with colleagues in addressing other identified needs of the school and student body.

6. *Teachers demonstrate a commitment to their students and a passion for improving their profession through such means as:*
 - a. bringing their enthusiasm about learning and about life into their daily work; and
 - b. showing a commitment to developing the minds and characters of their students.