
Core Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

STANDARD INDICATOR 4.2

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The teacher uses current research-based resources, ongoing feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth.

In their pursuit of continuous improvement and enhancement of their personal professional practice, accomplished teachers stay abreast of current research and, when appropriate, incorporate new findings into their practice. They take advantage of professional development opportunities, such as conferences, workshops, and digital learning experiences. Because testing new approaches and hypotheses is a commonplace habit among such teachers, they might conduct, publish, and present their own research, if so inclined. Accomplished educators understand the legitimacy and the limitations of the diverse sources they employ to inform their teaching, and they use those sources judiciously to enrich their practice.

An enthusiasm for, and dedication to, continued professional development distinguishes accomplished teachers and exemplifies the critical disposition they nurture in their students. The thinking, reasoning, and learning that characterize first-rate teaching are thus valuable twice over: not only are thoughtful teachers able to instruct their students more efficiently and effectively, they also serve as powerful models for the analytical mindset they strive to develop in children and young adults. Teachers who are exemplars of careful, logical deliberation—considering purposes, marshaling evidence, and balancing outcomes—are more likely to communicate the importance of critical thinking to their students and demonstrate how it is accomplished. Those teachers model other crucial traits as well, such as a commitment to creativity in their work or the willingness to take risks when exploring new intellectual, emotional, physical, and artistic realms.

Accomplished teachers therefore serve as paradigms of lifelong learning and achievement. Character and competence contribute equally to their educative manner. Such teachers embody the virtues they impart to their students: curiosity and a love of learning, tolerance and open-mindedness, fairness and justice, an appreciation for our cultural and intellectual heritages, and respect for human diversity and dignity. Moreover, they epitomize the intellectual capacities they foster: the ability to reason carefully, consider multiple perspectives, question received wisdom, adopt an inquiry-based approach, solve problems, and persevere. In all aspects of their action and demeanor, accomplished teachers convey the significance of reflection and learning, of pursuit and achievement.

Adapted from NBPTS, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, 2nd ed. (2016, pp. 32–33).

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Key Elements of Teacher Practice Related to Standard Indicator 4.2

- Searching out opportunities that will serve to cultivate their own learning;
- Staying abreast of current research and, when appropriate, incorporating new findings into their practice;
- Value placed on opportunities for others to observe and offer a critique of their teaching;
- Enthusiasm for, and commitment to, ongoing professional development and using newly learned practices that benefit students; and
- Exemplifying the virtues teachers seek to impart to students: curiosity and a love of learning; tolerance and open-mindedness; fairness and justice; appreciation for our cultural and intellectual heritages; respect for human diversity and dignity; and such intellectual capacities as careful reasoning, the ability to take multiple perspectives, to question received wisdom, to be creative, to take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Questions for Reflection and Planning

- What resources do I use to expand my skills and knowledge about content and teaching strategies?
- What professional development opportunities do I participate in to improve my practice?
- How do I solicit feedback from colleagues, students, and parents, and how do I use that feedback to improve my planning and instruction?
- How do I use peer observation and feedback to improve my practices?
- What additional methods do I use to inform myself of current best practices and use them to benefit students in the learning process?
- How do I demonstrate enthusiasm for ongoing professional development that exemplifies a disposition I hope to nurture in students?

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4.2 LEVEL 1	
Standard Indicator 4.2. Continuous Professional Growth. The teacher uses current research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth.	
Level	
Performance-Level Descriptors	<p>The teacher does not reference current research-based resources, use feedback from others, or engage in professional learning opportunities to improve his or her practice.</p> <p>The teacher does not apply new learning to his or her work with students.</p>
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher does not seek out opportunities that will serve to cultivate his or her own learning. ■ The teacher does not participate in opportunities for others to observe and offer a critique of his or her teaching. ■ The teacher does not stay abreast of current research and, when appropriate, incorporate new findings into his or her practice.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A teacher makes it clear that she is not interested in having peers observe in her classroom. ■ A teacher’s mathematics units show little to no connections to instructional practices that are based on current research. ■ The only professional development that an art teacher attends is that which occurs during the required staff meeting. ■ After attending a required training on the use of Thinking Maps to support a schoolwide focus on assisting students in developing critical thinking skills, the teacher makes no attempts to implement the new learning in ongoing classroom instruction.
Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from INTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)	<p><i>Develop the ability to:</i> Assume ownership and responsibility for ongoing professional learning connected to learner needs.</p>

Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Build skills on how to develop a professional growth plan.

- Examine your own teacher evaluation data and identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Work with a coach or experienced colleague to determine needs, set goals, and identify individually focused learning experiences to improve practice and student learning.

Build skills in identifying and accessing research, resources, and critical colleagues to implement professional growth plans.

- Seek coaching to identify questions to guide reflection on data that identifies learner needs and ways to incorporate that knowledge into ongoing practice.
- Work with a coach or colleague to seek out resources and job-embedded opportunities for professional growth, and select those that support the individual professional growth plan.

Actively seek out and incorporate feedback to strengthen practice.

- Participate in opportunities to observe other classrooms and be observed, using the learning to improve practice.

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4.2 LEVEL 2	
Standard Indicator 4.2. Continuous Professional Growth. The teacher uses current research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth.	
Level 2, Developing	
Performance-Level Descriptors	<p>The teacher uses readily available current resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to engage in improvement of personal professional practice.</p> <p>The teacher attempts to apply knowledge and skills gained from professional learning to his or her practice with students; however the impact on student learning is either inconsistent or unclear.</p>
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher attends professional development activities that are organized or required by the school or district. ■ The teacher participates in opportunities for others to observe and offer a critique of their teaching when organized or required by the school. ■ The teacher stays abreast of current research but works inconsistently to incorporate new findings into his or her practice.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A teacher attends the schoolwide training about classroom climate and administers the required student input survey but does not consistently use the feedback to make changes in his classroom practice. ■ As part of the peer review program, a teacher agrees to have a peer observe in her classroom, engages in the required postobservation, and signs off on its completion to satisfy the school requirement. ■ The teacher attends monthly team meetings to discuss student progress and share strategies that are working for struggling students. She attempts to implement some of the suggested flexible grouping strategies but is hindered through the lack of a clearly defined classroom management system needed to do this. ■ As a result of his observation, the teacher met once with his coach to address some of the feedback from his principal. He makes initial attempts to review some recommended research and implement the suggestions from the coach but requests no additional feedback.
Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from INTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)	<i>Develop the ability to:</i> Assume ownership and responsibility for ongoing professional learning connected to learner needs.

Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Build skills on how to develop a professional growth plan.

- Examine your own teacher evaluation data and identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Work with a coach or experienced colleague to determine needs, set goals, and identify individually focused learning experiences to improve practice and student learning.

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Build skills in identifying and accessing research, resources, and critical colleagues to implement professional growth plans.

- Seek coaching to identify questions to guide reflection on data that identifies learner needs and ways to incorporate that knowledge into ongoing practice.
- Work with a coach or colleague to seek out resources and job-embedded opportunities for professional growth, and select those that support individual professional growth plan.

Actively seek out and incorporate feedback to strengthen practice.

- Participate in opportunities to observe other classrooms and be observed, and use the learning to improve practice.

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4.2 LEVEL 3	
Standard Indicator 4.2. Continuous Professional Growth. The teacher uses current research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth.	
Level 3, Effective	
Performance-Level Descriptors	<p>The teacher uses a variety of current research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to engage in continuous improvement and enrichment of personal professional practice.</p> <p>The teacher engages in a thoughtful process of applying knowledge and skills gained from professional learning to his or her practice, reflecting on the level of ongoing, meaningful impact these strategies are having on student learning and making adjustments as needed.</p>
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher actively searches out opportunities that will serve to cultivate his or her own learning. ■ The teacher values opportunities for others to observe and offer a critique of his or her teaching. ■ The teacher stays abreast of current research and, when appropriate, incorporates new findings into his or her practice.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher joins a technology partnership and is able to incorporate the use of many new resources that he finds truly beneficial for motivating his students and increasing the quality of their work. ■ The teacher has been working on a particular instructional strategy with the mathematics coach and asks her grade-level colleagues to observe a lesson and provide feedback before their next professional learning community meeting. ■ The teacher attends the district workshops on literacy centers and implements strategies that are improving the engagement of the students during center time.
Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)	<i>Develop the ability to:</i> Assume ownership and responsibility for ongoing professional learning connected to learner needs.

Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Expand skills in developing a professional growth plan.

- Examine your own teacher evaluation data and identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Work with a coach or experienced colleague to determine needs, set goals, and identify individually focused learning experiences to improve practice and student learning.

Build skills in identifying and accessing research, resources, and critical colleagues to implement professional growth plans.

- Collaborate with others to identify questions to guide reflection on data that identifies learner needs and ways to incorporate that knowledge into ongoing practice.
- Work with colleagues to seek out resources and job-embedded opportunities for professional growth, and select those that support the individual professional growth plan.
- Keep a journal of how implementation of new practices are affecting student learning.

Actively seek out and incorporate feedback to strengthen practice.

- Participate in opportunities to observe other classrooms and be observed, and use the learning to improve practice.

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4.2 LEVEL 4

Standard Indicator 4.2. Continuous Professional Growth. The teacher uses current research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth.

Level 4, Distinguished

<p>Performance-Level Descriptors</p>	<p>The teacher seeks out and accesses a variety of relevant current research-based resources, feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities, including professional learning resources or structures of his or her own design, to engage in continuous improvement and enrichment of personal professional practice.</p> <p>The teacher engages in a thoughtful process of applying knowledge, skills, and innovative practices gained from professional learning to his or her overall practice, reflecting on the level of ongoing, meaningful impact these strategies are having on student learning and making defensible adjustments as needed based on this level of impact.</p>
<p>Critical Attributes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher searches out a variety of opportunities that will serve to cultivate his or her own learning. ■ The teacher participates regularly in opportunities for others to observe and offer a critique of his or her teaching. ■ The teacher stays abreast of current research, sometimes develops findings on the basis of his or her own experiences, and, when appropriate, incorporates new findings into his or her practice. ■ The teacher has enthusiasm for, and commitment to, ongoing professional development that exemplifies a disposition she or he works to nurture in students.
<p>Possible Examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A teacher has developed a comprehensive plan to better incorporate feedback into his ongoing work. At the end of each unit, he has students work in discussion groups to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the unit and what could be improved; as he plans the unit, he often asks colleagues to look at some of his plans and make suggestions; and at some point in the unit, he invites a colleague or his principal to observe a new strategy he is working on and provide feedback. He also sends home a student work folder showcasing the work from the unit and invites parents and caregivers to comment and ask questions about the work and return it to school. ■ A teacher initiates a semester-long action research project that will guide her in improving her formative assessment practices. She presents her progress to peers during team meetings and seeks feedback to make adjustments as she proceeds. ■ A teacher has taken an active role in both developing and providing training on the peer review process. ■ The teacher shares with the students new strategies being learned during teacher training sessions and how they are designed to improve instruction for students and why other teacher may be observing some lessons to assist with a successful implementation.
<p>Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from INTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)</p>	<p><i>Develop the ability to:</i> Collaborate with others to design and implement professional learning for self and others.</p>

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Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Expand skills in facilitating adult learning.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop facilitation and coaching skills for working with adult learners.
- Seek feedback from mentors to refine skill in working with adult learners.

Build skills in designing professional learning experiences to improve practice.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to augment skill in developing targeted professional learning experiences for adult learners.
- Use grade-level and content area team meetings to seek feedback on planning appropriate collaborative professional learning experiences.