Teaching Excellence Framework

A Research-Based Professional Growth Rubric

How to Use This Rubric

This rubric synthesizes research from Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching, John Hattie's Visible Learning (effect sizes), and Robert Marzano's High-Yield Instructional Strategies to create a comprehensive evaluation tool focused on both the art and science of teaching.

Performance Levels:

- **Distinguished (4)**: Exceptional, innovative practice with impact beyond own classroom
- **Excellent (3)**: Sophisticated, skillful practice with clear positive impact on students
- **Proficient (2)**: Solid, consistent practice demonstrating clear understanding
- **Developing (1)**: Emerging understanding with inconsistent implementation; growth expected with support

DOMAIN 1: THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING

Evidence-Based Instructional Design

Component 1A: Systematic Instruction

Definition: Teacher designs and implements a logical, structured scope and sequence that ensures no gaps in essential skills.
Research Connection: Hattie's Direct Instruction (ES = 0.60) | Marzano's Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback (ES = 0.61)

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)
Scope & Sequence	Maintains comprehensive, sophisticated scope and sequence that maps all essential skills across the year; shares expertise with colleagues to improve coherence	Develops and implements detailed scope and sequence with clear skill progressions and logical flow	Follows a structured scope and sequence with clear skill progressions	Scope and sequence is unclear, incomplete, or frequently skips essential steps
Prerequisite Skills	Anticipates prerequisite skills proactively and addresses gaps before they impede progress; designs assessments that reveal gaps early	Identifies prerequisite skill gaps quickly and addresses them systematically	Identifies and addresses prerequisite skill gaps when discovered	Inconsistently addresses or doesn't recognize prerequisite skill gaps
Pacing	Adjusts pacing fluidly based on formative data while maintaining instructional integrity; balances coverage and mastery expertly	Adjusts pacing responsively based on student understanding; maintains balance between coverage and depth	Maintains appropriate pacing through most of the curriculum	Pacing is often too fast or too slow for student needs; instruction feels reactive rather than planned
Long-Range Planning	Creates sophisticated long-range plans that show interconnections across units and spiraling of concepts	Develops clear long-range plans showing skill progression and connections	Plans units in logical sequence with attention to building skills	Limited evidence of long-range planning; units may lack connection

Component 1B: Explicit Instruction

Definition: Teacher provides clear, direct teaching with think-alouds, modeling, and unambiguous explanations.
Research Connection: Hattie's Teacher Clarity (ES = 0.75) | Hattie's Explicit Teaching (ES = 0.60) | Marzano's clarity and direct instruction

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Think-Alouds	Models thinking with sophisticated think-alouds that make expert thinking visible; students can replicate the thinking process independently	Uses think-alouds skillfully to reveal mental processes; students grasp both the content and the thinking behind it	Regularly models thinking processes through clear think-alouds	Attempts think-alouds but explanations are often unclear or incomplete; students struggle to follow the thinking

Clarity	Explanations are crystal-clear with precise academic language; anticipates confusion points proactively	Consistently provides clear, well-structured explanations; uses academic vocabulary effectively	Provides clear, direct explanations of concepts and procedures	Explanations lack clarity or contain errors; students frequently confused by instruction
Misconceptions	Anticipates and proactively addresses potential misconceptions before they occur; designs instruction to prevent confusion	Identifies common misconceptions and addresses them explicitly during instruction	Demonstrates skills clearly before asking students to practice	May not recognize when students are confused; instruction sometimes reinforces misconceptions
Examples	Uses carefully selected examples and non-examples to deepen conceptual understanding; students can generate their own examples	Provides multiple, varied examples that illustrate concepts from different angles	Uses appropriate examples to support understanding	Examples may be confusing, insufficient, or contradict the concept being taught
Student Understanding	Students can articulate what they're learning, why it matters, and teach concepts to peers	Students understand instruction, can begin work confidently, and ask clarifying questions when needed	Students understand instructions and can begin work independently	Students cannot begin work without significant additional support; frequent reteaching needed

Component 1C: Sequential Instruction

Definition: Teacher follows a logical order based on how skills build, teaching foundational concepts before complex applications.
Research Connection: Hattie's Prior Knowledge (ES = 0.71) | Scaffolding (ES = 0.82) | Cognitive Load Theory

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Learning Progressions	Designs sophisticated learning progressions that expertly scaffold from simple to complex; makes progression visible to students	Creates detailed learning progressions with clear intermediate steps between foundational and advanced skills	Follows logical sequence from foundational to advanced skills	Sequence is unclear or skips steps; introduces concepts prematurely
Connections	Makes connections between concepts explicit and sophisticated; students understand how learning builds across time	Seamlessly connects new learning to previously mastered concepts; makes relationships clear	Teaches prerequisite skills before dependent skills; makes some connections explicit	Connections between lessons are unclear or absent; teaches advanced skills without establishing foundations
Flexibility	Adjusts sequence responsively based on student readiness while maintaining logical progression; documents decisions	Adjusts sequence when students need additional foundation work; maintains overall coherence	Makes connections between current and prior learning explicit	Frequently must reteach due to gaps; doesn't build on prior learning effectively
Student Awareness	Students can articulate how skills build on each other and what comes next in their learning	Students understand how current learning connects to what they've learned before	Students can identify some connections between lessons	Students see lessons as isolated events

Component 1D: Multi-Modal Instruction

Definition: Teacher engages multiple senses and brain regions through varied instructional methods.
Research Connection: Hattie's Multi-sensory Learning | Marzano's Nonlinguistic Representations (ES = 0.75) | Dual Coding Theory

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Modality Integration	Strategically combines visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities for optimal learning; matches modality to content expertly	Skillfully integrates multiple modalities within lessons; students engage through varied sensory channels	Regularly incorporates multiple modalities in lessons	Relies primarily on one or two modalities; limited sensory engagement
Nonlinguistic Representations	Uses nonlinguistic representations masterfully (gestures, manipulatives, diagrams, movements); students independently create representations	Uses varied nonlinguistic representations effectively; students engage with manipulatives, visuals, and movement meaningfully	Uses manipulatives, visuals, and movement to support learning	May use manipulatives but without clear instructional purpose; limited use of nonlinguistic representations
Content Matching	Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of which modalities work best for specific content; explains choices to students	Selects modalities strategically based on content and student needs	Engages different senses throughout instruction	Doesn't consider which modalities best match content; arbitrary use of materials
Student Independence	Students independently select and use appropriate modalities for their own learning	Students use multiple modalities with guidance	Students engage with provided multi-modal instruction	Students passive in single-modality instruction

Component 1E: Cumulative Instruction

Definition: Teacher ensures each new skill builds on previously mastered skills, never introducing concepts in isolation.
Research Connection: Hattie's Spaced Practice (ES = 0.60) | Interleaved Practice (ES = 0.60) | Marzano's Homework and Practice (ES = 0.77)

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Spiraling	Designs sophisticated spiraling curriculum where skills are revisited with increasing complexity across the year	Intentionally incorporates previously taught skills into new lessons with clear progression	Regularly incorporates previously taught skills into new lessons	Sometimes reviews prior skills but connections may be superficial or inconsistent
Integration	Seamlessly integrates previously taught skills into new learning; students see connections automatically	Integrates previously taught skills strategically into new learning contexts	Reviews foundational skills before introducing dependent concepts	New concepts taught somewhat in isolation from previous learning
Assessment	Uses sophisticated cumulative assessments that reveal long-term retention patterns	Uses cumulative assessments regularly to ensure long-term retention	Provides cumulative practice opportunities	Limited cumulative practice; assessments focus only on recent content
Student Metacognition	Teaches students how to connect and integrate skills independently; students seek connections	Students can articulate how current learning builds on prior learning	Students participate in cumulative practice	Students don't see or retain connections over time

Component 1F: Responsive Instruction (Diagnostic)

Definition: Teacher uses assessment data to adjust instruction and provide targeted interventions based on student needs.
Research Connection: Hattie's Formative Evaluation (ES = 0.68) | Response to Intervention (ES = 1.29) | Feedback (ES = 0.73)

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Diagnostic Tools	Uses sophisticated diagnostic tools that reveal specific learning needs; analyzes patterns across students	Uses effective diagnostic tools to identify specific learning needs quickly	Regularly administers assessments to identify learning needs	Gives assessments but may not use data to adjust instruction; assessments lack diagnostic power
Real-Time Adjustment	Adjusts instruction fluidly in real-time based on student performance; anticipates needs before confusion spreads	Adjusts instruction responsively based on assessment data; targets specific misconceptions	Adjusts whole-class instruction based on assessment data	Reteaching is generic rather than targeted; continues planned instruction regardless of student understanding
Interventions	Provides sophisticated, evidence-based interventions immediately targeted to specific needs	Provides targeted interventions promptly based on diagnostic information	Provides reteaching when needed	May not identify specific student needs; limited differentiation or adjustment
Student Metacognition	Shares diagnostic insights with students to build their metacognition and self-assessment skills	Students receive specific feedback about their learning needs	Students know when they need additional support	Students unaware of their specific learning needs

Component 1G: Mastery-Driven Instruction

Definition: Teacher ensures students demonstrate mastery before advancing to dependent skills.
Research Connection: Hattie's Mastery Learning (ES = 0.57) | Success Criteria clarity | Prerequisite Knowledge research

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Mastery Criteria	Establishes sophisticated, clear mastery criteria for all skills; criteria are challenging yet attainable	Defines specific, measurable mastery criteria for each skill	Defines what mastery looks like for each skill	Mastery criteria are unclear or undefined
Evidence of Mastery	Uses multiple, varied forms of evidence to determine mastery; includes transfer tasks	Checks for mastery using varied methods before moving to dependent skills	Checks for mastery before moving to dependent skills	May advance students before mastery achieved; limited evidence of student understanding
Support	Provides differentiated time and support until mastery achieved; tracks individual progress systematically	Provides additional time and varied approaches until students achieve mastery	Provides additional practice for students who haven't mastered content	Limited support for students who need more time; moves forward based on calendar rather than readiness
Student Self-Assessment	Students self-assess against mastery criteria accurately and independently	Students can articulate what mastery looks like and assess their progress	Students know the success criteria	Students unclear about what mastery means

Component 1H: Interactive Instruction

Definition: Teacher creates active student engagement through questioning, discussion, and collaborative learning opportunities.
Research Connection: Hattie's Classroom Discussion (ES = 0.82) | Reciprocal Teaching (ES = 0.74) | Marzano's Cooperative Learning (ES = 0.74)

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Student Discourse	Orchestrates sophisticated student-to-student discourse; students drive discussion and build on each other's ideas	Facilitates rich student discussion regularly; ensures all voices are heard	Regularly incorporates student discussion and collaboration	Some student interaction but primarily teacher-directed; limited student-to-student dialogue

Questioning	Uses sophisticated questioning that promotes deep thinking and transfers cognitive load to students; questions spark inquiry	Uses varied questioning skillfully to check understanding and promote higher-order thinking	Uses questioning to check understanding and promote thinking	Questions are primarily recall-level or don't promote thinking
Collaborative Structures	Designs innovative collaborative structures that maximize all students' participation and learning	Implements effective collaborative structures with clear roles and accountability	Provides structured opportunities for student interaction	Collaboration opportunities are limited, unclear, or ineffective
Student Agency	Students initiate questions, drive discussion, and take ownership of collaborative learning	Students actively participate in discussions and ask meaningful questions	Students participate when called upon or in structured activities	Students are passive recipients of information; minimal interaction

DOMAIN 2: THE ART OF TEACHING

Responsive, Adaptive, and Personalized Practice

Component 2A: Emphasis

Definition: Teacher makes strategic decisions about what to stress, highlight, and prioritize for maximum learning impact.
Research Connection: Hattie's Teacher Clarity (ES = 0.75) | Marzano's Setting Objectives (ES = 0.61) | Selective Attention research

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Prioritization	Expertly identifies and emphasizes the most critical concepts with sophisticated understanding of what matters most	Clearly identifies and emphasizes important concepts and skills strategically	Clearly emphasizes important concepts and skills	Attempts to emphasize key points but may give equal weight to all content or unclear priorities
Strategic Use	Uses emphasis masterfully to highlight patterns, connections, and key principles; creates memorable emphasis	Uses emphasis strategically through voice, repetition, and highlighting to draw student attention effectively	Uses voice, repetition, and highlighting to draw attention to important content	Priorities may not be clear to students; emphasis may be inconsistent or missing
Responsive Adjustment	Adjusts emphasis fluidly based on student needs, prior knowledge, and current understanding	Adjusts emphasis based on student response and understanding	Students understand what is most important	Treats all content as equally important; students can't identify key concepts
Student Metacognition	Teaches students sophisticated strategies for identifying what's most important in any content	Students can explain why certain content is emphasized and what's most important	Students can identify what teacher emphasizes as important	Students unsure what to focus on or what's most important

Component 2B: Alignment

Definition: Teacher matches instruction to specific student needs, readiness levels, and learning profiles.
Research Connection: Hattie's Differentiation (ES = 0.42) | Personalized Learning | Zone of Proximal Development

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Targeted Instruction	Designs precisely targeted instruction matched to individual student needs; sophisticated understanding of each learner	Regularly differentiates instruction effectively based on student readiness and needs	Regularly differentiates based on student readiness	Attempts differentiation but may be inconsistent or superficial
Differentiation	Seamlessly differentiates content, process, and product; differentiation is invisible but effective	Differentiates content, process, or product skillfully based on student needs	Adjusts difficulty level and support for different learners	May provide same instruction to all despite varied needs; one-size-fits-all approach
Grouping	Uses sophisticated, flexible grouping strategies that maximize learning for all students	Uses data-driven flexible grouping effectively	Uses data to match instruction to student needs	Limited or ineffective grouping; groups may be static or not purposeful
Student Awareness	Students understand their learning targets, current levels, and how instruction is personalized for their growth	Students understand their individual learning goals and how they're supported	Students know they receive differentiated support	Students unaware of how instruction meets their needs

Component 2C: Approach

Definition: Teacher uses creativity, engagement strategies, and instructional methods that resonate with students.
Research Connection: Hattie's Teacher-Student Relationships (ES = 0.52) | Student Engagement research | Motivation theory

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Engagement	Creates highly engaging, memorable experiences that students reference	Uses creative, engaging approaches consistently;	Uses varied approaches to maintain student interest;	Approaches are routine or predictable; students show limited interest or engagement

	weeks or months later; engagement is sustained throughout	students are actively interested and curious	engagement is generally positive	
Flexibility	Reads student response in real-time and adjusts approach fluidly mid-lesson; multiple backup approaches ready	Monitors student engagement and adjusts approach when needed; comfortable changing direction	Incorporates engaging elements into most lessons; willing to try new approaches	Uses same approach repeatedly regardless of student response; limited flexibility when approach isn't working
Cultural Connections	Weaves student interests, cultures, and backgrounds naturally throughout instruction; students see themselves in the content	Incorporates student interests and cultural connections intentionally; content feels relevant	Makes connections to student experiences when possible	Limited awareness of or connection to student interests and cultural backgrounds
Memorability	Creates experiences students remember years later; instruction becomes part of students' learning stories	Lessons include memorable moments or hooks that students reference later	Solid instruction that keeps students engaged	Forgettable instruction; students can't recall what was taught the previous day

Component 2D: Scale

Definition: Teacher adjusts voice volume, proximity, intensity, and instructional size based on student needs and attention.
Research Connection: Classroom Management research | Teacher Presence literature | Attention and Engagement research

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Voice & Volume	Masters the full range of instructional scales (whisper to projection, intimate to whole-group); uses voice as sophisticated tool	Uses voice volume and modulation skillfully to maintain attention and create emphasis	Adjusts voice volume and proximity appropriately	May use limited range of voice or proximity; voice may be monotone or inconsistently audible
Proximity	Uses proximity and positioning masterfully to support learning, create intimacy, and manage behavior	Uses proximity strategically to engage students and support learning	Varies instructional groupings (whole, small, individual) appropriately	Remains static or doesn't adjust proximity strategically; limited movement around room
Intensity	Adjusts intensity masterfully based on reading the room; knows when to amp up and when to bring energy down	Adjusts intensity appropriately based on student energy and content	Uses physical presence to support engagement	Limited range of intensity; may not match energy to content or student needs
Instructional Sizing	Creates varied instructional "sizes" expertly that maximize attention and intimacy	Uses varied grouping sizes strategically (whole, small, pairs, individual)	Uses different instructional groupings at appropriate times	Uses one volume or grouping size consistently regardless of purpose

Component 2E: Variety

Definition: Teacher incorporates diverse methods, activities, and formats to maintain engagement and address different learning preferences.
Research Connection: Hattie's Strategy to Integrate with Prior Knowledge (ES = 0.93) | Cognitive Variability research | Practice Variability

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Method Integration	Seamlessly integrates diverse methods within and across lessons; variety enhances rather than distracts from learning	Uses multiple methods and activities regularly with clear purpose	Uses multiple methods and activities regularly	Some variety but may rely on same methods frequently; variety may lack purpose
Strategic Variety	Uses strategic variety that reinforces learning goals; knows when consistency matters and when novelty helps	Varies formats intentionally to maintain interest while supporting learning objectives	Varies formats to maintain interest	Activities may feel repetitive or variety may be for novelty rather than learning
Balance	Balances novelty with consistency masterfully; routines provide structure while variety maintains engagement	Balances familiar routines with novel approaches effectively	Incorporates different types of practice	Relies heavily on either routine or novelty; lacks balance
Rich Experiences	Students experience rich variety of high-quality learning experiences that build sophistication over time	Students engage through multiple varied methods regularly	Students experience some variety in approaches	Little to no variety in activities; monotonous instruction

Component 2F: Exposure

Definition: Teacher provides optimal frequency and duration of practice opportunities for skill development.
Research Connection: Hattie's Spaced Practice (ES = 0.60) | Deliberate Practice (ES = 0.79) | Marzano's Homework and Practice (ES = 0.77)

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Practice Design	Designs sophisticated practice schedules using spacing and interleaving research; documents optimal exposure patterns	Provides practice opportunities strategically using spacing and varied contexts	Provides multiple practice opportunities over time	May provide practice but timing or frequency may not be optimal
Optimal Exposure	Determines and provides optimal number of exposures for deep learning based on content complexity	Uses spaced review strategically to build long-term retention	Uses spaced review of content	Limited review or spacing; practice may be massed

Balance	Balances massed and distributed practice expertly based on learning goals	Balances initial intensive practice with distributed practice effectively	Gives adequate practice before assessment	Either insufficient practice or excessive drill
Student Metacognition	Teaches students sophisticated strategies about effective practice; students understand spacing effects	Students understand why spacing practice matters for their learning	Students receive multiple practice opportunities	Students lack adequate practice time or opportunity

Component 2G: Repetition

Definition: Teacher provides meaningful, strategic repetition that builds automaticity without causing boredom.
Research Connection: Hattie's Practice/Rehearsal (ES = 0.73) | Automaticity Development research | Deliberate Practice

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Varied Contexts	Designs sophisticated repetition that feels fresh through meaningfully varied contexts	Provides strategic repetition using varied contexts effectively	Provides strategic repetition of essential skills	Some repetition but may be excessive, insufficient, or monotonous
Spacing	Uses research-based spaced repetition for optimal retention; timing is precise	Uses spaced repetition effectively for key skills	Uses varied contexts for repeated practice	May become monotonous or lack strategic spacing
Automaticity	Builds automaticity strategically in foundational skills; students achieve fluency without boredom	Builds toward automaticity in foundational areas with engaging repetition	Builds toward automaticity in foundational areas	Either excessive drill causing boredom or insufficient repetition
Monitoring	Monitors for both automaticity development and boredom; adjusts repetition expertly	Monitors student response and adjusts repetition as needed	Provides repetition for skill building	No strategic repetition or repetition that bores students

Component 2H: Balance

Definition: Teacher reads the room and adjusts pacing, activities, and groupings to maintain optimal learning conditions.
Research Connection: Responsive Teaching research | Teacher Intuition and Expertise | Classroom Climate research

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Reading the Room	Demonstrates exceptional ability to sense subtle shifts in energy, attention, and understanding; anticipates needs before problems arise	Reads student engagement, energy, and comprehension accurately; responds appropriately to what's observed	Monitors student engagement and energy levels; notices when students are struggling or fatigued	Often misses cues about student fatigue, confusion, or disengagement; doesn't notice when adjustments are needed
Fluid Adjustment	Makes seamless, natural adjustments that students may not even notice; pacing feels perfectly calibrated	Adjusts pacing, intensity, and activities based on student needs; transitions are smooth	Adjusts activities when students show fatigue or confusion; willing to deviate from plan when needed	Sticks rigidly to planned activities regardless of student response; transitions are abrupt or poorly timed
Rigor & Support	Masterfully balances challenge with support so all students remain in optimal learning zone	Balances rigor with appropriate scaffolding; students stretched but not overwhelmed	Balances different types of activities appropriately; students experience both challenge and success	Activities may be too easy or too difficult; students either bored or frustrated
Timing	Has intuitive sense of optimal timing; knows when to push forward and when to slow down	Adjusts lesson pacing based on student understanding; flexible with timing	Maintains generally appropriate pacing; sometimes adjusts timing when needed	Pacing is often too fast or too slow; timing feels off
Anticipation	Anticipates when adjustments needed before problems arise	N/A	N/A	N/A

DOMAIN 3: PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Integrating Art and Science in Design

Component 3A: Science-Based Planning

Definition: Teacher designs lessons using evidence-based practices, cognitive science principles, and research-validated strategies.
Research Connection: Comprehensive use of Hattie and Marzano strategies | Cognitive Load Theory | Learning Sciences research

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Research Integration	Lesson plans explicitly reference research-based strategies with sophisticated understanding of why they work; shares expertise	Incorporates multiple research-based strategies intentionally with clear rationale	Incorporates multiple research-based strategies intentionally	Some research-based strategies used but may not understand rationale or use inconsistently

Cognitive Load	Designs instruction that masterfully manages cognitive load; anticipates and prevents overload	Plans strategically to minimize extraneous cognitive load while maximizing learning	Plans with cognitive load in mind	Planning may not consider cognitive principles; lessons may overload or under-challenge
Misconceptions	Anticipates and plans for common misconceptions based on research and experience; prevention built in	Plans to address common misconceptions explicitly	Sequences learning logically based on how skills build	May not anticipate misconceptions; planning doesn't address common errors
Activity Sequencing	Sequences activities based on sophisticated understanding of cognitive science; flow is optimal	Sequences activities based on cognitive science principles effectively	Sequences activities logically	Activity sequence may not reflect learning science; poor flow
Research Integration	Lesson plans explicitly reference research-based strategies with sophisticated understanding of why they work; shares expertise	Incorporates multiple research-based strategies intentionally with clear rationale	Incorporates multiple research-based strategies intentionally	Some research-based strategies used but may not understand rationale or use inconsistently

Component 3B: Art-Informed Planning

Definition: Teacher plans for engagement, creativity, relationships, and responsive adjustments.
Research Connection: Teacher-Student Relationships (ES = 0.52) | Student Motivation research | Culturally Responsive Teaching

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Engagement Strategies	Plans include sophisticated creative hooks, engagement strategies, and relationship-building opportunities that resonate deeply	Plans include purposeful engagement strategies, hooks, and relationship building	Plans include engagement strategies and hooks	Plans may be rigid or lack engagement elements; little attention to relationships
Anticipation	Anticipates precisely where artistic adjustments will be needed; builds in multiple pathways	Considers where adjustments may be needed and plans some flexibility	Considers student interests and backgrounds	Limited consideration of student context or need for flexibility
Cultural Responsiveness	Weaves student interests, culture, and context throughout plans naturally and authentically	Incorporates student interests, culture, and context intentionally in planning	Allows some flexibility for adjustment	Plans are generic and don't reflect student backgrounds
Flexibility	Builds in strategic flex time and multiple pathways for responsive teaching	Includes flex time for responsive adjustments	Plans show some flexibility	Plans are inflexible and rigid; no room for adjustment

DOMAIN 4: REFLECTION AND GROWTH

Continuous Improvement Through Art and Science

Component 4A: Artistic Reflection

Definition: Teacher reflects on human elements: relationships, engagement, joy, surprise, and classroom dynamics.

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Emotional Reflection	Reflects deeply on emotional and relational aspects with sophisticated insight; identifies subtle patterns over time	Regularly reflects on student engagement, relationships, and classroom climate with meaningful insights	Reflects on student engagement and relationships; considers emotional and social aspects of lessons	Reflection focuses primarily on content delivery and logistics; limited attention to relationships or engagement
Key Questions	Asks probing questions: What surprised me? Where was joy? How did relationships shape learning? What did students' body language tell me?	Asks: What worked emotionally? When did students light up? How were relationships? What was the energy?	Considers emotional and social aspects of lessons; notes moments of high and low engagement	Does not consider human elements of teaching in reflection; focuses only on whether lesson plan was completed
Insight Application	Uses artistic insights strategically to inform future planning; patterns identified lead to intentional adjustments	Uses insights from reflection to adjust future approaches; sees connections between emotions and learning	Notes moments of high and low energy; sometimes uses insights to adjust practice	Limited connection between reflection and future practice; observations don't lead to changes
Intuition Development	Demonstrates increasingly refined intuition about student needs; can articulate what informs their "gut feelings"	Developing strong intuition about student needs based on accumulated reflections	Notes developing sense of what works with particular students or groups	Little evidence of developing teaching intuition; each lesson feels like starting from scratch

Component 4B: Scientific Reflection

Definition: Teacher analyzes instruction using data, cognitive principles, and research-based effectiveness.

Element	Distinguished (4)	Excellent (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
Data Analysis	Uses multiple data sources systematically to analyze instructional effectiveness with sophisticated interpretation	Examines student work and assessment data regularly with meaningful analysis	Examines student work and assessment data	Limited use of data in reflection; may collect but not analyze
Key Questions	Asks: Did my methods align with research? What does data tell me? What worked and why? How can I refine this?	Asks: Which strategies were effective? What does the data show? How should I adjust?	Evaluates which strategies were effective	May not connect outcomes to methods used; evaluation is superficial
Connections	Draws sophisticated connections between specific instructional choices and student outcomes	Connects outcomes to specific instructional choices systematically	Makes evidence-based adjustments	Limited connection between methods and results
Research Application	Actively researches solutions to identified challenges; applies new research to practice	Seeks solutions to challenges using research and evidence	Adjusts based on what worked or didn't	Does not evaluate effectiveness systematically

Art and Science Integration Framework

Science Dominates Planning

Questions to Ask During Planning:

- What cognitive load will this create?
- How can I chunk this information?
- What prior knowledge must I activate?
- Which research-based strategies will I use?
- How will I check for understanding?
- What sequence makes most sense cognitively?
- Where might misconceptions arise?
- How can I engage multiple brain regions?

Art Dominates Reflection

Questions to Ask During Reflection:

- What did I sense in the room?
- When did energy flag?
- Which moments sparked curiosity?
- How did relationships impact learning?
- What surprised me?
- Where did learning become joyful?
- What student cues did I notice?
- How did my adjustments work?

Both Inform Instruction

The Continuous Cycle:

- Artistic Reflection → Scientific Planning → Instruction → Artistic Reflection
- ↑ ↓
- ←————————————————————————————————————

Each cycle strengthens both capacities, creating teachers who can both engineer learning (science) and inspire it (art).

Scoring Summary

Overall Performance Calculation

To calculate an overall performance score, use weighted averages based on the number of components in each domain:

Domain Weights:

- Domain 1 (Science): 8 components = 40% of total
- Domain 2 (Art): 8 components = 40% of total

- Domain 3 (Planning): 2 components = 10% of total
- Domain 4 (Reflection): 2 components = 10% of total

Performance Ranges:

- **Distinguished**: 3.50 - 4.00
- **Excellent**: 2.75 - 3.49
- **Proficient**: 2.00 - 2.74
- **Developing**: 1.00 - 1.99

Growth Expectations:

- From Developing to Proficient: 6-18 months with support
    - Note: If after sustained support (typically 6-12 months of intensive coaching), a teacher remains at developing in multiple critical components, this may indicate poor fit for the profession.
- From Proficient to Excellent: 1-3 years of focused development
- From Excellent to Distinguished: 2-4+ years; may only occur in specialized areas

How the New Levels Could Work

Developing (1)

- Emerging understanding
- Inconsistent implementation
- Needs significant support and coaching
- Expected for: New teachers (Years 1-2), teachers new to content/grade, teachers working on unfamiliar components

Proficient (2)

- Solid, consistent practice
- Demonstrates clear understanding
- Implements with fidelity most of the time
- Expected for: Most experienced teachers in most components

Excellent (3)

- Goes beyond consistent to sophisticated
- Adapts strategies skillfully to context
- Visible positive impact on student learning
- Models for others
- Expected for: Experienced teachers in their strength areas, teachers moving toward leadership

Distinguished (4)

- Exceptional, innovative practice
- Students as partners in learning
- Impact extends beyond own classroom
- Leads professional learning for others
- Expected for: Small percentage of teachers, typically in 2-3 components where they've specialized