

Continuum of Teacher Development

NEW TEACHER CENTER

**FORMATIVE
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Introduction to the Continuum of Teacher Development

We hope that this introduction will help you understand the use of the *Continuum of Teacher Development*. The *Continuum* describes teaching practice and professional development throughout a teacher's career.

The *Continuum* was initially developed in 1992 for use by the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project to support the reflective practice of beginning teachers. It has been updated several times to reflect the diversity of students and to meet the changing needs of teachers. The *Continuum* has been implemented successfully as part of an ongoing collaboration between beginning teachers and their mentors or coaches to assess practice and set goals for professional development over time.

The *Continuum* presents a holistic view of teaching. Its organization corresponds to the six Professional Teaching Standards*:

- Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning
- Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning
- Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning
- Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students
- Assessing Student Learning
- Developing as a Professional Educator

The six standards are meant to be considered as a whole and not in any particular sequence or order. Each standard contains more specific elements of teaching practice. They are interrelated and work together to provide a complete picture of effective teaching practice.

The *Continuum* is organized to describe five levels of development. These levels are labeled **Beginning, Emerging, Applying, Integrating, and Innovating**. Each level addresses what a teacher should know and be able to do in the different *Continuum* standards. The levels do not represent a *chronological* sequence in a teacher's growth, but each row describes *developmental* levels of performance. A teacher may be at a beginning or emerging level of practice in some places on the *Continuum* and at advanced levels in some others, no matter how many years she or he has been in the profession.

For example, in the standard for **Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment**, a teacher may be at the **Emerging** level in *Establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect* and at the **Integrating** level in *Using instructional time effectively*. Because a teacher's growth is developmental, one may return to an earlier level temporarily if there are changes in a teacher's career, such as new course content, grade level, school, or student demographics.

* These standards correspond to the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession*, ©1997.

How to Use the *Continuum*

To use the *Continuum*, read across each row of descriptors from left (Beginning) to right (Innovating) as the descriptors become more complex and sophisticated. As you move from left to right, locate the descriptor that best defines your *current* classroom practice. Any practice described on the left of the *Continuum* is carried across to those on the right even if not explicitly stated.

The *Continuum* provides a common language for setting and discussing goals for professional development within an environment of collegial support. The *Continuum* is a guide for self-reflection, assessment, and conversation among teachers, mentors, and administrators. It is intended to help teachers interpret their teaching and make informed decisions about their ongoing development as professionals. In the New Teacher Center Formative Assessment System (FAS), the *Continuum* serves as the entry point for developing an *Individual Learning Plan* in which teachers identify and work toward professional goals. The *Continuum* is *not* meant to be used as a rubric to define performance standards or expectations. It is not an isolated observation instrument, but is used as one component of the comprehensive FAS process of assessing and supporting the development of teaching practice. It may be also used to assist teachers in setting goals as part of an evaluation process or within a peer coaching relationship.

The *Continuum* has proven to be a powerful tool as teachers identify their areas of growth, move from assistance to autonomy, and become lifelong learners. We hope that the *Continuum* will help you assess your own teaching and plan your professional development.

Diversity refers to culture, ethnicity, language, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, learning abilities, and learning styles. Equity means doing whatever it takes to ensure learning for all students.

Glossary of Terms

Continuum: a document describing different levels of practice or knowledge along various stages of development.

Descriptor: an individual cell, or “box,” corresponding to the developmental levels in the *Continuum*.

Standard: one of six areas of teaching practice that comprise the *Continuum*.

Element: a sub-area or sub-domain of teaching practice within any of the six *Continuum* standards.

Level: the levels of teacher development that represent what a teacher should know and be able to do.

Beginning: a level of professional development in which the teacher relies on ongoing assistance from more experienced colleagues for support, guidance, and survival, and is trying to internalize and apply what she or he has learned about teaching.

Emerging: a level of development in which the teacher still relies on more experienced colleagues for support but is moving toward becoming more self-directed and independent in her or his practice.

Applying: a level of development in which the teacher is able to teach independently, internalizes and easily applies what she or he has learned about teaching.

Integrating: a level of development in which the teacher is fully skilled, confident, and able to integrate complex elements of instruction, curriculum, and professional development into that practice. The integrating teacher moves beyond the classroom in her or his teaching, collegial relationships, and professional growth activities and is often a leader among peers.

Innovating: a level of development in which the teacher is consistently innovating and creating in all areas of teaching and professional development. A leader in school, district, and local community, the innovating teacher contributes to the broader education community through staff development, classroom-based research, articles in professional journals, etc.

Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Connecting students' prior knowledge, life experience, and interests with learning goals	Opens lesson to capture students' attention and interest. Teacher recognizes the value of students' prior knowledge and life experiences.	Asks questions that elicit students' prior knowledge, life experiences and interests. Some connections are made to the learning goals and objectives of the lesson.	Implements activities and elicits questions that help students make connections between what they already know and the learning goals and objectives.	Uses questions and activities to extend students' abilities to integrate what they know with the learning goals and objectives. Makes adjustments during lesson to ensure that all students meet the learning goals.	Creates a context for students to synthesize learning goals and objectives with what they know and develop their own complementary learning goals.
Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students' diverse needs	Uses a few instructional strategies. Delivers instruction with available resources and materials.	Varies instruction to increase student participation. Selects strategies, resources, and visuals with some consideration of students' academic and linguistic needs.	Elicits student participation through a variety of instructional strategies intended to match students' academic and linguistic needs. Checks for student understanding.	Uses a repertoire of strategies and resources. Selects and differentiates learning to accommodate students' diverse learning styles.	Uses extensive repertoire of strategies to meet students' diverse academic and linguistic needs and ensure fullest participation and learning for all students.
Facilitating learning experiences that promote autonomy, interaction, and choice	Directs learning experiences through whole group and individual work with possibilities for interaction and choice.	Varies learning experiences to include work in large groups and small groups, with student choice within learning activities.	Provides learning experiences utilizing individual and group structures to develop autonomy and group participation skills. Students make choices about and within their work.	Uses a variety of learning experiences to assist students in developing independent working skills and group participation skills. Supports students in making appropriate choices for learning.	Integrates a variety of challenging learning experiences that develop students' independent learning, collaboration, and choice.

Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Engaging students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities that make subject matter meaningful	Focuses questions on fact and key concepts to support learning subject matter.	Asks critical thinking questions to relate facts and key concepts of subject matter. Some issues within the subject matter are identified by the teacher.	Engages students through activities and questioning strategies that develop skills in identification and understanding of key concepts and issues. Supports all students in problem posing and problem solving.	Engages students in analysis of key concepts and facts through activities and questions that consider multiple perspectives. Supports students to initiate problem posing, problem solving, and inquiry.	Facilitates regular opportunities for students to design and implement inquiries and problem solving to analyze content and draw conclusions, considering multiple perspectives within and across subject matter.
Promoting self-directed, reflective learning for all students	Directs learning experiences and monitors student progress within a specific lesson. Assistance is provided as requested by students.	Provides some opportunities for students to monitor their own work and to reflect on progress and process.	Supports students in developing skills needed to monitor their own learning. Students have opportunities to reflect on and discuss progress and process.	Structures learning activities that enable students to set goals and develop strategies for demonstrating, monitoring, and reflecting on progress and process.	Facilitates students to initiate learning goals and set criteria for demonstrating and evaluating work. Students reflect on progress/process as a regular part of learning experiences.

Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Creating a physical environment that engages all students	Arranges room for teacher accessibility to or visibility of students. Room displays relate to the curriculum. Movement and access may be restricted by barriers.	Arranges and manages room for easy movement and access to resources. Room displays represent current topics of study.	Designs movement patterns and access to resources to promote individual and group engagement. Room displays are used in learning activities.	Designs and manages room and resources to accommodate students' needs and involvement in learning. Displays are integral to learning activities.	Uses total physical environment as a resource to promote individual and group learning. Students are able to contribute to the changing design of the environment.
Establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect	Establishes rapport with individual students. Acknowledges some incidents of unfairness and disrespect.	Builds caring, friendly rapport with most students. Models equitable and respectful relationships. Has some strategies to respond to unfairness and disrespect.	Promotes caring and respectful interactions. Responds to incidents of unfairness and disrespect equitably. Encourages students to respect differences.	Maintains caring, respectful, and equitable relationships with students. Supports students in developing skills to respond to inequity and disrespect.	Fosters a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning community. Students participate in maintaining a climate of equity, caring, and respect and may initiate creative solutions to conflicts.
Promoting social development and group responsibility	Encourages student responsibility for self. Creates opportunities for individual students to have classroom responsibilities.	Uses some strategies and activities to develop students' individual responsibility and recognition of others' rights and needs. Students share in classroom responsibilities.	Promotes positive student interactions as members of large and small groups. Provides some opportunities for student leadership within the classroom.	Engages students in individual and group work that promotes responsibility to the classroom community. Supports students to take initiative in classroom leadership.	Facilitates an environment in which students take initiative socially and academically. Promotes and supports student leadership beyond the classroom.

Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning

Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Establishing and maintaining standards for student behavior	Communicates rules and consequences. Responds to disruptive behavior. Focuses attention on presenting lessons.	Establishes expectations and consequences for student behavior. Responds appropriately to disruptive behavior and promotes some positive behaviors.	Uses strategies that prevent or lessen disruptive behavior and reinforce expectations for behavior. Monitors behavior while teaching and during student work time.	Equitably reinforces expectations and consequences and supports students to monitor their own behavior and each other's in a respectful way.	Facilitates a positive environment in which students are guided to take a strong role in maintaining and monitoring behavior.
Planning and implementing classroom procedures and routines that support student learning	Establishes some procedures to support student learning. Students are aware of the procedures.	Develops and guides students to learn routines and procedures for most activities.	Identifies, supports, and monitors students in following routines and procedures that are appropriate and efficient for the learning activities.	Uses strategies to assist students in developing and maintaining equitable routines and procedures.	Assists all students in developing and internalizing equitable routines and procedures. Students show ownership of routines and procedures.
Using instructional time effectively	Pacing reflects too much or too little time for learning activities, classroom business, and transitions.	Provides time for students to complete learning activities. Develops some routines for classroom business and most transitions are timely. Uses strategies to pace and adjust instruction to ensure continual engagement.	Provides adequate time for presentation and for completion of learning activities. Paces instruction and classroom business to maintain engagement. Uses transitions to support engagement of all students.	Paces instruction to include ongoing review and closure of lessons to connect them to future lessons. Classroom business and transitions are efficient and integrated into learning activities.	Presents, adjusts, and facilitates instruction and daily activities so all students have time for learning, are continually engaged, and have opportunities for reflection and assessment. Supports students to self-monitor time on task.

Creating and Maintaining an Effective Environment for Student Learning

Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Demonstrating knowledge of subject matter content and student development	Has a basic knowledge of subject matter and student development. Promotes an understanding of key concepts.	Uses knowledge of subject matter to identify key concepts and associated skills.	Communicates key concepts, skills, and themes in an accurate, clear, and coherent manner. Builds on instruction with students' cognitive and linguistic abilities in mind.	Uses expanded knowledge of subject matter to support student understanding of key concepts, themes, multiple perspectives, and relationships in subject area(s). Activities are suitable for students' cognitive development.	Flexibly uses comprehensive knowledge of subject matter and student development to ensure that all students understand key concepts, themes, multiple perspectives, and relationships in and among subject area(s).
Organizing curriculum to support student understanding of subject matter	Demonstrates some knowledge of curriculum to support student understanding.	Uses knowledge of subject matter to promote students' understanding of key concepts, skills, and standards taught. May connect key concepts to standards and frameworks.	Identifies key concepts, skills, and units/themes to facilitate student understanding and reflect standards and frameworks.	Organizes and sequences subject matter clearly to coordinate core curriculum and content standards within and across subject matter as appropriate.	Designs and adapts subject matter to demonstrate a consistent in-depth student understanding of content and relationships among various concepts and themes. Content standards are fully integrated in the core curriculum.
Interrelating ideas and information within and across subject matter areas	Focuses on core curriculum and skills. Attempts to relate content to prior lessons within the subject matter.	Identifies key concepts and skills in core curriculum and standards and connects lessons to previous learning.	Connects key concepts, skills, and themes within subject matter to the standards. Builds on prior lessons and students' backgrounds.	Integrates key concepts, skills, and underlying themes within and across curriculum to support standards. Capitalizes on opportunities to make connections while teaching.	Connects key concepts and underlying themes within and across the curriculum to extend in-depth learning for all students. Supports students' application of cross-curricular learning.

Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning

Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Developing student understanding through instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter	May use a few instructional strategies to make the content accessible to students.	Matches one or more appropriate strategies to subject matter to effectively communicate concepts.	Matches strategies appropriate to subject matter to encourage student understanding and critical thinking. Strategies utilize students' interests and backgrounds.	Develops and uses multiple strategies that challenge all students. Assists students to individually construct their own knowledge and think critically.	Uses a repertoire of instructional strategies that are appropriate to subject matter. Utilizes strategies that challenge and support all students to independently apply and think critically about the subject matter.
Using materials, resources, and technologies to make subject matter accessible to students	Uses available instructional materials, resources, and technologies for specific lessons to support student learning.	Uses instructional materials, resources, and technologies to present concepts and skills. Some materials and resources reflect students' diversity. Develops some systems to provide equitable access to resources.	Selects and utilizes appropriate relevant instructional materials, resources, and technologies to present concepts and skills. Materials reflect linguistic diversity of students. Resources are made available to all students.	Selects, adapts, and creates a range of relevant materials, resources, and technologies to enrich learning, to reflect linguistic and cultural diversity of students, and to provide for equal access.	Analyzes, adapts, and creates a wide range of relevant instructional materials, resources, and technologies to extend students' understanding and provide equal access. Materials reflect diversity beyond the classroom.

Understanding and Organizing Subject Matter for Student Learning

Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for all Students

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Drawing on and valuing students' backgrounds, interests, and developmental learning needs	Uses available materials and resources for academic lessons with some attention to students' interests and learning needs.	Develops and gathers materials to supplement available resources. Most lessons acknowledge students' prior knowledge, interests, and learning needs.	Develops lessons that incorporate students' prior knowledge, interests, instructional and linguistic learning needs.	Uses a wide range of materials to access and build upon students' prior knowledge, interests, instructional and linguistic needs, to extend student understanding.	Designs instruction to build on students' prior knowledge, instructional needs, linguistic needs, and diversity to challenge all students.
Establishing and articulating goals for student learning	Goals for lessons may be identified for students. Activities for lessons are explained.	Communicates expectations for student learning in most lessons.	Articulates and links goals to instructional activities. Maintains high expectations when setting goals for students.	Ensures that students understand short- and long-term learning goals. Goals reflect high expectations and challenge students at their level.	Articulates short- and long-term goals with high expectations for learning. Designs activities so that students have opportunities to participate in setting, revising, and achieving personal goals.
Developing and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning	Develops lessons to address a particular concept or skill utilizing available resources.	Develops most concepts and skills through a series of lessons that are connected and consider student linguistic and instructional needs.	Plans appropriately sequenced instruction and use of materials to promote student understanding of basic concepts and skills and considers linguistic and instructional needs.	Develops and sequences lessons appropriate to subject matter complexity and interrelatedness to ensure student learning.	Sequences instruction to help students synthesize and apply new knowledge and make connections within and across subject matter areas.

Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for all Students

Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for all Students

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Designing short-term and long-term plans to foster student learning	Plans for daily lessons and activities based on available materials, curriculum outlines, and student content standards.	Plans for daily and weekly lessons with attention to unit/ short-term goals and student content standards.	Develops short- and long-term plans that organize and link goals with learning activities and student content standards.	Designs and sequences short- and long-term plans appropriate to the content. Plans integrate goals, student content standards, and learning activities.	Designs short- and long-term plans that are comprehensive and cohesive across the content.
Modifying instructional plans to adjust for student needs	Follows lessons as planned.	Adjusts lessons based on informal assessment of student understanding and performance from previous lesson, having taken note of student confusions.	Adjusts plans in advance to accommodate levels of ability and interests of most students. Makes modifications during lessons to address confusions and individual student performance.	Uses assessments to inform modifications of lessons in advance. Throughout the learning activity, assessments of student understanding are used to influence changes in instruction.	Uses a wide range of assessments to inform modifications of lessons in advance. Makes appropriate modifications for students during lessons and supports students in monitoring and communicating their own understanding.

Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for all Students

Assessing Student Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Establishing and communicating learning goals for all students	Uses available textbooks, resources, and curriculum guidelines to develop learning goals.	Identifies learning goals for lessons utilizing student content standards. Goals are communicated to students without revision.	Articulates goals based on student content standards. Clearly communicates learning goals to students and families.	Establishes clear and appropriate goals based on student content standards, with consideration of students' learning needs. Involves students and families in developing individual goals to support learning.	Integrates learning goals into all learning activities. Establishes, reviews, and revises learning goals with students and families on an ongoing basis.
Collecting and using multiple sources of information to assess student learning	Uses one or two sources of information to assess student learning and monitor student progress.	Uses several assessments to monitor student progress.	Develops strategies to use assessment tools for monitoring student progress and informing instruction.	Uses a variety of assessment tools. Collects, selects, and reflects upon evidence to guide short- and long-term plans and support student learning.	Embeds a wide range of ongoing assessments in instructional activities to provide consistent guidance for planning and instruction.
Involving and guiding all students in assessing their own learning	Checks and monitors work in progress. Communicates student progress through school mandated procedures.	Provides students with feedback on work in progress, as well as completed tasks. Some student involvement in correcting work.	Presents guidelines for assessment to students. Assists students in reflecting on and assessing their own work.	Integrates student self-assessment and reflection into the learning activities. Students engage in some peer assessment of work against criteria.	Engages all students in self- and peer assessment and in monitoring their progress and goals over time.

Assessing Student Learning

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Using the results of assessments to guide instruction	Administers required assessments. Recognizes student confusion and re-teaches material primarily using the same technique.	Uses information from some assessments to plan learning activities. Checks for understanding with a few students while teaching and addresses confusions.	Uses formal and informal assessments to plan lessons. Regularly checks for understanding from a wide variety of students to identify student needs and modify instruction.	Includes assessments as a regular part of instruction to plan and revise lessons. Identifies student understanding during the lesson using a variety of methods and adjusts teaching to meet student needs.	Uses a wide range of assessments to guide planning and make adjustments to teaching. Embeds broad-based checking for understanding in instruction and is able to modify and redesign lessons as needed.
Communicating with students, families, and other audiences about student progress	Provides students and families with information about their progress through school mandated procedures.	Provides students with information about their current progress as they engage in learning activities. Families and support personnel are contacted as needed.	Provides students with information about their current progress and how to improve their work. Establishes regular communication with families and support personnel.	Engages students, families, and support personnel in regular discussions regarding student progress and improvement plans. Ongoing information is provided from a variety of sources for students, families, and support personnel.	Involves students, families, and support personnel as partners in the assessment process. Provides comprehensive information about students' progress and improvement plans to students, families, and support personnel.

Developing as a Professional Educator

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Reflecting on teaching practice and planning professional development	Reflects on elements of teaching (e.g., pacing, procedures, discipline, movement, materials, etc.).	Reflects on instructional successes and dilemmas. Plans professional development to add to instructional strategies and knowledge of student learning.	Reflects on the relationship of teaching practice and student learning. Plans professional development based on reflections.	Analyzes and reflects on teaching and learning based on evidence gathered regularly. Plans professional development based on reflections and other resources.	Integrates analysis and reflection into daily practice based on a wide variety of evidence in relationship to professional growth and student learning. Plans draw on a wide variety of resources to expand knowledge.
Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally	Develops goals through required processes. Attends required inservice trainings.	Sets goals considering self-assessment and other feedback. Expands knowledge and skills through available professional development opportunities (e.g., workshops, classes, seminars, etc.).	Sets short-term professional goals based on self-assessment of effectiveness, student learning, and feedback. Seeks out opportunities to realize professional goals.	Sets and modifies short- and long-term goals considering self assessment and feedback from a variety of sources. Actively engages in and contributes to professional development.	Contributes to professional organizations, literature, and development opportunities to extend own teaching practice and that of colleagues. Leads professional development.
Working with communities to improve professional practice	Learns about students' communities. May take students into their community as part of learning activities.	Increases understanding of the roles of the community in students' lives. May attend selected community events. Uses some district resources and community resources available through the school.	Identifies and uses appropriate district resources in support of families and student learning. Expands knowledge of, and connections with, the full range of community resources.	Uses knowledge of and strengthens connections with local communities' cultures, services, and resources to support student learning.	Promotes school and community collaborations across multiple groups. Provides students with a full range of community experiences that benefit students and/or families.

Developing as a Professional Educator

Developing as a Professional Educator

	Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
Working with families to improve professional practice	Communicates with families at reporting periods and school events. Advises families of problems. Recognizes the role of the family in student learning.	Shares student progress and classroom activities. Invites families to contribute in the classroom. Values family backgrounds and their role in student learning.	Regularly communicates student progress in appropriate ways, taking into account the diversity of families. Encourages families to contribute to the classroom and school.	Maintains regular and responsive communication with all families. Provides opportunities for families to actively participate in the classroom and school.	Engages families in a variety of responsive, ongoing, two-way communications in support of student success. Structures a wide range of opportunities for families to contribute to the classroom and school community.
Working with colleagues to improve professional practice	Establishes a positive working relationship with a few colleagues. Interacts with colleagues to gather resources. Seeks out trusted colleagues to consider solutions to problems with students.	Expands positive working relationships with colleagues and support staff. Collaborates with colleagues to plan curriculum, coordinate resources, and solve problems.	Works constructively with colleagues and support staff to improve student learning and reflect on practice.	Engages staff in dialogue and reflection to support student learning and teacher growth in responsive and appropriate ways.	Provides opportunities to collaborate with staff to support learning for all students. Provides leadership for and contributes to the learning of other educators.
Balancing professional responsibilities and maintaining motivation	Has a positive attitude in the classroom. Develops an understanding of professional responsibilities.	Maintains positive attitude, demonstrates understanding of professional responsibilities, and seeks support to balance professional responsibilities with personal needs.	Maintains a positive attitude through the year, demonstrates professional integrity, and balances professional responsibility with personal needs.	Maintains motivation and commitment to all students, demonstrates professional integrity, and challenges self intellectually and creatively.	Maintains motivation and commitment to all students and the professional community, demonstrates and models professional integrity, and challenges self intellectually and creatively throughout career.

Developing as a Professional Educator