Silver Strong & Associates
Thoughtful Education Press

Guidance on Section 1249(3) of Michigan Public Act 173 (2015) for the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework™

www.ThoughtfulClassroom.com/TCTEF

MAY 2016

Michigan Public Act 173, Section 1249(3)

State of Michigan
Act No. 173
Public Acts of 2015
(Effective Date: November 5, 2015)

From Section 1249:

(3) Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, a school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy shall post on its public website all of the following information about the evaluation tool or tools it uses for its performance evaluation system for teachers:

(a) The research base for the evaluation framework, instrument, and process or, if the school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy adapts or modifies an evaluation tool from the list under subsection (5), the research base for the listed evaluation tool and an assurance that the adaptations or modifications do not compromise the validity of that research base.

(b) The identity and qualifications of the author or authors or, if the school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy adapts or modifies an evaluation tool from the list under subsection (5), the identity and qualifications of a person with expertise in teacher evaluations who has reviewed the adapted or modified evaluation tool.

(c) Either evidence of reliability, validity, and efficacy or a plan for developing that evidence or, if the school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy adapts or modifies an evaluation tool from the list under subsection (5), an assurance that the adaptations or modifications do not compromise the reliability, validity, or efficacy of the evaluation tool or the evaluation process.

(d) The evaluation frameworks and rubrics with detailed descriptors for each performance level on key summative indicators.

(e) A description of the processes for conducting classroom observations, collecting evidence, conducting evaluation conferences, developing performance ratings, and developing performance improvement plans.

(f) A description of the plan for providing evaluators and observers with training.

For more information on the development of this legislation and the full text of Public Act 173 of 2015, please visit the following page on the Michigan Legislature website:
http://www.legislature.mi.gov/%28S%281nyjef3mncv0oqsimoivd2qv%29%29/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&objectname=2015-SB-0103

A | Research Base

The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework (TCTEF) is based on five distinct lines of research:

1. ***Instructional Design & Delivery –*** At the heart of the TCTEF is an instructional design model synthesizing the best research on how to design and deliver lessons and units that promote student learning, including Madeline Hunter's classic "Elements of Lesson Design" (1984), *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007). By synthesizing this research, we have identified five universal "episodes" that all well-designed instructional sequences include:
   - Preparing Students for New Learning
   - Presenting New Learning
   - Deepening and Reinforcing Learning
   - Applying Learning
   - Reflecting On and Celebrating Learning

   For each of the Five Episodes (Dimensions 5-9), the TCTEF outlines six to eight observable, research-based teaching practices. By aligning these practices to particular instructional episodes, we help ensure that administrators are looking for the right things at the right time and are "on the same page" as the teacher being observed.

2. ***Research-Based Instructional Practices –*** These practices are drawn from a wide body of research identifying those practices that are proven to raise student achievement, including the meta-analytic studies *Classroom Instruction that Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) and *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007), and our own research-based texts, *The Strategic Teacher* (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2007) and *Tools for Thoughtful Assessment* (Boutz, Silver, Jackson, & Perini, 2012). From these and other resources, we have identified over thirty specific and observable teaching practices that are backed by a strong and reliable research base.

3. ***Formative Assessment –*** Instruction and assessment go hand in hand, and research clearly demonstrates that when instruction is informed by regular formative assessment, student learning in-creases dramatically (Black & William, 1998; Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, & Willms, 2001; Black, 2003; Rodriguez, 2004).

   Built into the TCTEF are indicators designed around the research findings and classroom recommendations of leading experts on formative assessment (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006; Chappuis, 2009). As with the indicators defining good instructional practices, the indicators defining good assessment practices are linked to specific instructional episodes.

4. ***Teacher Effectiveness –*** The impetus for developing the TCTEF came out of our work with dozens of schools and districts that were using the preeminent teacher effectiveness models, including Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice* (2007), Robert Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* (2007), and Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston's *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching* (2011). These schools were requesting help in applying and adapting these models, in providing teachers with the training in research-based strategies they needed to improve their practice, and in training administrators to conduct more meaningful and productive observations. In working with these schools over time, we became deeply familiar with Danielson's and Marzano's frameworks, both in terms of the research behind them and in terms of how schools were using them to improve teaching and learning.

   A key development that emerged from this work was the identification of the Four Cornerstones of an Effective Classroom (Dimensions 1-4 of the TCTEF). Research on teacher effectiveness shows that a successful classroom is much more than a well-managed classroom. By conducting a deep analysis of preeminent teacher effectiveness frameworks and standards (CCSSO, 2011; Danielson, 2013; Marzano, 2013; Stronge, 2010) and working with hundreds of teachers to convert the research into a simple and practical classroom model, we have found that all successful classrooms rest on Four Cornerstones:

   - Organization, Rules, and Procedures
   - Positive Relationships
   - Engagement and Enjoyment
   - A Culture of Thinking and Learning

   These Four Cornerstones are the non-negotiables of a truly successful learning environment—those universal elements that we find in all highly effective classrooms. For each of the Four Cornerstones, the TCTEF outlines six to eight observable, research-based teaching practices.

5. ***Feedback from the Field –*** Research can only take us so far. At Silver Strong & Associates, we have been working with hundreds of schools over the last 40 years to improve teacher effectiveness. So, while all the indicators in our TCTEF are research-based, we also knew that the indicators had to be clear and usable for educators. Thus, as we developed our indicators, we asked over 250 teachers and administrators to review the indicators, test their validity through trial observations, and help us refine and streamline the TCTEF so that it would meet the needs of teachers and administrators.

B | Qualifications

The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework is a comprehensive system for observing, evaluating, and refining classroom practice. It synthesizes a wide body of research on instructional design and teacher effectiveness, as well as insight from over 250 teachers and administrators from around the country. The ultimate goal of the TCTEF is to create a common language for talking about high-quality teaching and how classroom practice can be improved.

LEAD DEVELOPER

Harvey F. Silver, EdD, is the cofounder and president of Silver Strong & Associates and Thoughtful Education Press. He has over four decades of experience as an educator, presenter, coach, and consultant. Harvey is a best-selling author and has conducted thousands of workshops for schools, districts, and state education organizations throughout the United States. He is a dynamic presenter who speaks regularly at regional, national, and international conferences. As lead developer of the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework, Harvey worked with over 250 educators in the field to learn about their concerns regarding teacher evaluation and to develop a thoughtful approach to observing, evaluating, and refining classroom practice.

CO-DEVELOPER

Matthew J. Perini, MA, serves as Senior Director of Content Development for Silver Strong & Associates and Thoughtful Education Press and oversees all aspects of content development including publishing, workshop training designs, and marketing. An accomplished writer and editor with over a decade of experience in educational publishing, Matt has co-authored a number of recent best-sellers in education. Serving as co-developer, Matt aligned the TCTEF to the significant research and standards on teacher effectiveness and created *The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework Resource Guide* (2012) that supports training and implementation.

Silver and Perini have also collaborated on a number of best-selling educational texts, including *The Strategic Teacher* (2007), *The Core Six* (2012), *Tools for Thoughtful Assessment* (2012), and *Tools for a Successful School Year* (2016). (Note that these last two titles directly align to the Five Episodes of Effective Instruction and the Four Cornerstones of an Effective Classroom, thus supporting all instructional dimensions in the TCTEF with practical instructional techniques.)

PILOT LEADERS

In addition, the leaders at two key pilot sites—**Cindy Weber**, (former) Superintendent of Durand Area Schools in Durand, Michigan, and **Susan Kreisman**, (former) Principal of Manhattan Hunter Science High School in New York City—also contributed to the refinement of the TCTEF and to the development of the training, coaching, and resources that support it.

C | Evidence

Silver Strong & Associates commissioned an independent research activity to assess these technical properties as they pertain to The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework (TCTEF). Dr. Thomas Kelsh, an independent research consultant with over 25 years of experience conducting program evaluation, research, and measurement services at the federal (U.S. Department of Education), state (New York, Massachusetts, and North Dakota), and local (hundreds of school districts) levels was selected to undertake this work.

Reliability

The reliability of the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework compares favorably to well-established instruments such as the 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (5D) and Danielson's Framework for Teaching (FTT). This is especially true when observers conduct multiple observations across the school year. A study by the University of Michigan[1] suggested that observers should stagger their observations across the year and during different times of the day "to capture the variety of lessons a teacher might conduct." The reliability of all classroom observations is improved when these guidelines are followed. For 5D and FTT, reliability for three observations by a single rater was measured at approximately 0.6 and 0.75. For the TCTEF, reliability under the same conditions was measured at 0.8. This suggests that the effectiveness of a teacher can be reliably measured by the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework.

Validity

One type of validity that is particularly relevant to establishing evidence of the system of performance evaluation for teachers being used by a given school district is content validity. Content validity refers to the extent to which a measure represents all facets of a given social construct (in this case—teaching). One useful activity[2] for measuring the content validity of a particular measure is gauging agreement among raters or judges regarding how essential items of a tool match with current instruments with proven evidence. To that end, independent crosswalks of The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework with the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching showed that 7 of the 10

[1]University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (2013). *Promoting High Quality Teacher Evaluations in Michigan: Lessons from a Pilot of Educator Effectiveness Tools*. Accessed from: http://www.mcede.org/system/resources/BAhbBlsHOgZmSSJXMjAxNC8wMi8wNC8yMC80NS8wNy80NzcvUHJvbW90aW5nX0hpZ2hfUXVhbGl0eV9UZWFjaGVyX0V2YWx1YXRpb25zX2luX01pY2hpZ2FuLnBkZgY6BkVU/Promoting-High-Quality-Teacher%20Evaluations-in-Michigan.pdf

[2] Lawshe, C.H. (1975). A quantitative approach to content validity. *Personnel Psychology, 28*, 563–575. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6570.1975.tb01393.x

TCTEF Dimensions and related Instructional Indicators were rated[3] as *Strongly Aligned*. The remaining 3 Dimensions were rated *Moderately Aligned*. No Dimension was rated as *Weak* or *Not Aligned*. Finally, no knowledge or skill gaps were discerned in the TCTEF as a result of this crosswalk activity.

Likewise, the TCTEF crosswalk with the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards revealed that 6 of the 10 TCTEF Dimensions and related Indicators were rated as *Strongly Aligned*. The remaining 4 Dimensions were rated *Moderately Aligned*. No Dimension was rated as *Weak* or *Not Aligned*. As a result of this analysis, a small number of knowledge/skill gaps in the TCTEF were identified and shared with Silver Strong & Associates staff.

Efficacy

The 2013-2015 Evaluation Study of the Teacher Effectiveness Framework in Lorain (OH) City Schools[4] resulted in several noteworthy findings related to the efficacy of the TCTEF:

- As a result of TCTEF training and coaching sessions, nearly two-thirds of Lorain's elementary (64%) and secondary (66%) teachers increased their use of research-based instructional practices.
- Seventy-five percent of teachers believed that because of their use of the TCTEF, their students made progress toward meeting Ohio's New Learning Standards.
- Lorain students showed moderate improvements in academic behaviors, demonstrated greater perseverance/grit, and displayed positive changes in their mindset about learning over the course of the school year.

Similarly, a 2014 Evaluation Study of the Teacher Effectiveness Framework in West Babylon (NY) School District (WBSD)[5] reported positive findings:

- Critical mass of WBSD students have improved the quality of their academic behaviors as a result of The Thoughtful Classroom/TCTEF professional development:
    - Nearly one-half of school administrators (48%) and teachers (40%) report more active engagement in learning by their students.
    - Over a quarter of WBSD instructional staff are seeing increased academic behaviors that are aligned with the Common Core learning standards.

[3] Rating Rubric: 1= the alignment of the TCTEF and Danielson's Framework for Teaching indicates that there are few or none of the instructional indicators from the TCTEF Dimensions present in the appropriate Danielson domains and components; 2= the alignment of the TCTEF and Danielson's Framework for Teaching indicates that some of the instructional indicators from the TCTEF Dimensions present in the appropriate Danielson domains and components; 3= the alignment of the TCTEF and Danielson's Framework for Teaching indicates that a majority of the instructional indicators from the TCTEF Dimensions present in the appropriate Danielson domains and components; and 4=the alignment of the TCTEF and Danielson's Framework for Teaching indicates that all or almost all of the instructional indicators from the TCTEF Dimensions present in the appropriate Danielson domains and components

[4] *Evaluation of the Lorain City School District's The Thoughtful Classroom Professional Development Initiative* (2014). Measurement Incorporated, White Plains, NY

[5] *Evaluation of the West Babylon School District Strengthening Teaching and Learning Effectiveness Grant Program* (2014). Abacus Research Consultants, Inc.

D | Frameworks & Rubrics

The **Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework (TCTEF)** is a comprehensive system for observing, evaluating, and refining classroom practice. It synthesizes a wide body of research on instructional design and teacher effectiveness, as well as insight from over 250 teachers and administrators from around the country.

The ultimate goal of the TCTEF is to create a common language for talking about high-quality teaching and how classroom practice can be improved. The TCTEF allows for assessment according to ten dimensions of teaching, outlining a set of **observable teaching indicators** within each dimension and relevant **student behaviors** associated with effective instruction. It also includes **rubrics for developing summative evaluations**, along with a set of **protocols** to help school leaders provide **meaningful feedback** to teachers and conduct quality **pre- and post-observation conferences**.

What Are the Components of the TCTEF?

Research and experience prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that classroom instruction has far more impact on student learning than any other factor. A study of the world's top 25 school systems puts it this way: "The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction" (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). This is why two of the three TCTEF components (called domains) focus directly on classroom instruction.

DOMAIN ONE

Four Cornerstones of Effective Classrooms (Dimensions 1, 2, 3, & 4)

Around the TCTEF are four foundational dimensions that have been adapted from the preeminent teacher-effectiveness models (Danielson, 2007; Marzano, 2007; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008; Stronge, 2010). These are the four dimensions:

❶Organization, Rules, and Procedures
❷Positive Relationships
❸Engagement and Enjoyment
❹A Culture of Thinking and Learning

These cornerstones represent the universal elements of quality instruction, whether in a kindergarten class, an AP Physics lab, or anywhere in between. Without these four cornerstones in place, student learning will be compromised.

DOMAIN TWO

Five Episodes of Effective Instruction (Dimensions 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9)

While there are clear universal elements to good instruction, it is also true that good instruction tends to unfold in a series of distinct learning episodes. By synthesizing the best research on instructional design (Hunter, 1984; Marzano, 2007; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), we've identified five critical episodes that increase the likelihood of deep learning. In these five episodes, teachers work towards distinct instructional purposes:

❺Preparing Students for New Learning
❻Presenting New Learning
❼Deepening and Reinforcing Learning
❽Applying Learning
❾Reflecting On and Celebrating Learning

Understanding these five episodes—and their driving purposes—is critical for both the teacher and the observer. Teachers use these episodes to design high-quality lessons and units. For classroom observations, these five episodes immediately orient the observer within the instructional sequence, ensuring that teachers and observers are on the same page.

The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework

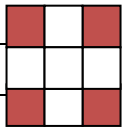
1 Organization, Rules, and Procedures	5 Preparing Students for New Learning	2 Positive Relationships
7 Deepening and Reinforcing Learning	6 Presenting New Learning	9 Reflecting On and Celebrating Learning
4 A Culture of Thinking and Learning	8 Applying Learning	3 Engagement and Enjoyment
10 Professional Practice		

DOMAIN THREE
Looking Beyond the Classroom

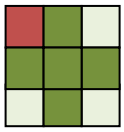
Effective Professional Practice (Dimension 10)

❿The TCTEF also includes a tenth dimension focused on professional practice, which addresses important non-instructional responsibilities, including the teacher's commitment to **ongoing learning**, **professionalism**, and **the school community**.

Let's take a look at these three domains in greater depth.



Domain One: The Four Cornerstones of Effective Classrooms



DIMENSION ONE: ORGANIZATION, RULES, AND PROCEDURES

Essential Question: How does the teacher organize the classroom to enhance learning and establish rules and procedures that clarify expectations?

Our first cornerstone of an effective classroom has to do with the rules, procedures, classroom policies, and organizational decisions that underlie effective classroom management. Obviously, such elements of classroom management are highlighted extensively in all the major research on teacher effectiveness, including Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice* (2007), Robert Marzano, Tony Frontier, and David Livingston's *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching* (2011), and Jon Saphier, Mary Ann Haley-Speca, and Robert Gower's *The Skillful Teacher* (2008).

Using these models, along with the most important research on classroom management (Brophy, 2006; Emmer & Gerwels, 2006; Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003), we have identified seven observable instructional indicators, along with a set of student behaviors that are signs of well-managed classrooms.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
1.1: Organizes classroom space (e.g., seating, resources, technology, decoration) to ensure safety, maximize learning, and meet overall goals and objectives **1.2:** Keeps the flow of activities in the classroom moving smoothly **1.3:** Establishes a manageable set of classroom rules and procedures and communicates with students about them regularly (e.g., posting them, modeling them, explaining the rationale behind them, discussing their applications in the classroom, and refining them as needed) **1.4:** Provides clear directions for classroom tasks using a variety of modalities (e.g., verbal, visual, physical demonstration) and checking to make sure students understand their roles and responsibilities **1.5:** Develops an effective plan for managing student behavior that includes positive consequences, negative consequences, and an appropriate level of home involvement **1.6:** Manages non-instructional duties (e.g., taking attendance, distributing materials and take-home notices, lunch counts) with minimal disruption to classroom learning **1.7:** Works effectively with other adults in the classroom (e.g., co-teachers, paraprofessionals, aides, student teachers)	• Show respect for each other and the classroom • Have access to necessary supplies and resources • Understand and follow classroom rules and procedures • Make good use of their time • Know what to do (self-directed) • Take responsibility for their own learning • Have a positive attitude • Use conflict-resolution techniques when there is a disagreement

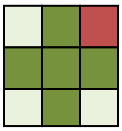
Assessing Dimension One

For each instructional dimension, we can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in each dimension. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations. The rubric highlights three critical components of effective practice:

- How committed is the teacher to the dimension? (For example: How committed is the teacher to organizing the classroom and establishing procedures that enhance learning?)
- How effectively does the teacher use the relevant practices (i.e., the instructional indicators) associated with this dimension?
- What impact does the teacher's instruction have on student learning? (This impact is typically assessed by looking for the student behaviors associated with each dimension.)

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
3	**Proficient:** *Clear commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices that have a positive impact on student learning.
4	**Expert:** *Strong commitment to effective instruction that shows advanced expertise*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices and is able to adapt them to students' needs and particular learning situations. These practices have a consistently positive impact on student learning.

DIMENSION TWO: POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



Essential Question: How does the teacher build meaningful relationships with the students and among students to promote learning?

Positive relationships are the heart of successful teaching and learning, whether those relationships are defined in terms of "respect and rapport" (Danielson, 2007), "effective relationships" (Marzano, 2007), or "personal relationship building" (Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008). In developing the indicators for this—the most personal of all the cornerstones—we synthesized the major research on social intelligence and classroom relationships (Hart & Hodson, 2004; Goleman, 2006; Vitto, 2003) while adding a dash of our own work in helping schools differentiate instruction and assessment. Why differentiation here? Well, by allowing all students to experience success through differentiation, we lay the groundwork for positive interaction throughout the classroom.

From this research base, we identified seven observable teaching indicators and a set of student behaviors associated with relationship-driven classrooms.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
2.1: Maintains a positive and "with it" demeanor that shows students their teacher cares about what's going on in the classroom and is committed to the idea that "we're all in this together"	• Are respectful of each other and the teacher • Collaborate with each other • Participate in whole-class and small-group discussions • Feel that "we're all in this together"

2.2: Gets to know students and incorporates their interests, aspirations, and backgrounds into the curriculum **2.3:** Differentiates instruction and assessment so students of all styles and ability levels can experience the joys of success **2.4:** Builds a classroom community that insists on respect and mutual support for each student's learning and provides opportunities for students to become familiar with each other **2.5:** Designs learning experiences that call for high levels of collaboration, discussion, and interaction among students **2.6:** Maintains an open and appropriate level of communication with students and the home **2.7:** Shows care and concern for students as individuals	• Display empathy • Share their feelings • Resolve conflicts • Have a voice

Assessing Dimension Two

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Two. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
3	**Proficient:** *Clear commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices that have a positive impact on student learning.
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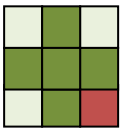

DIMENSION THREE: ENGAGEMENT AND ENJOYMENT

Essential Question: How does the teacher motivate students to do their best work and inspire the love of learning?

For this cornerstone of an effective classroom, we draw on four current lines of research:

- Robert Marzano's (2007) meta-analytic research into the factors affecting student engagement
- Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering's (2011) research into what makes classrooms engaging
- Charlotte Danielson's (2007) framework for engaging students in learning
- Our own research investigating the core motivational drives that influence students' level of commitment in the classroom (Silver & Perini, 2010)

However, if we have one quibble with the major literature on teacher effectiveness, it's that words like "joy" and "pleasure" are so hard to find. Perhaps this is a symptom of a bottom-line mentality that can make it all too easy to forget that few things will snuff out learning as well as a joyless classroom. And so we deliberately set out to expand the meaning of classroom engagement by including indicators about things like inspiring passion for learning and the capacity of the classroom to surprise and delight students.

From our research, we identified six observable teaching indicators and a set of student behaviors that are common in highly engaging classrooms.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
3.1: Engages students in diverse forms of thinking (e.g., practical, analytical, creative, exploring feelings and values) **3.2:** Uses key "motivational levers" like controversy, choice, competition, challenge, and creativity to increase students' commitment to learning **3.3:** Maintains a high level of student excitement and on-task behavior using a wide variety of tools and strategies **3.4:** Communicates and maintains a passion for teaching, learning, and quality work throughout lessons and units **3.5:** Taps into the power of "selfhood": encourages students to pursue their own interests, make their own choices, develop their own perspectives, and express their values and dreams **3.6:** Creates a classroom environment that has the capacity to inspire and delight (e.g., through enthusiasm, humor, novelty, color, movement)	• Are energetic and enthusiastic • Display effort • Enjoy themselves in the classroom • Express their own interests, ideas, and insights • Are on-task and motivated • Stretch their minds with different forms of thinking

Assessing Dimension Three

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Three. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
3	**Proficient:** *Clear commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices that have a positive impact on student learning.
4	**Expert:** *Strong commitment to effective instruction that shows advanced expertise*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices and is able to adapt them to students' needs and particular learning situations. These practices have a consistently positive impact on student learning.

DIMENSION FOUR: A CULTURE OF THINKING AND LEARNING

Essential Question: How does the teacher develop a classroom culture that promotes serious learning and sophisticated forms of thinking?

In *Enhancing Professional Practice*, Charlotte Danielson (2007) explains the importance of classroom culture:

> Classrooms without a culture for learning are characterized by an atmosphere where no one—teacher or students—cares about the content to be learned… On the other hand, classrooms with a culture for learning are cognitively busy places. Students have clearly accepted the notion that important outcomes can be achieved only by hard work, and they invest energy in their activities and assignments, persevering to overcome temporary setbacks. (p. 67)

This cornerstone rests solidly on Danielson's work in defining the criteria by which a culture of learning should be evaluated. But also notice the insertion of the word "thinking" into this cornerstone's title—A Culture of Thinking and Learning. Placing a more significant emphasis on thinking led us to draw on a number of other research bases as we developed this set of indicators, including

- Art Costa and Bena Kallick's (2008, 2009) Habits of Mind framework for increasing the power of student thinking.
- Richard Strong, Harvey Silver, and Matthew Perini's (2001) work on increasing the level of rigor in classrooms.
- Research demonstrating the value of teaching students how to use classroom strategies as thinking and learning tools (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996).

Using this research base to guide us, we identified eight teaching indicators and a set of student behaviors that typify classrooms that take thinking and learning seriously.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
4.1: Challenges students' minds with rigorous texts and content and equips them with the skills they need to handle rigorous content **4.2:** Engages students in extended, higher-order thinking challenges (e.g., inquiry, investigation, problem-based learning, action research projects) **4.3:** Encourages and challenges students to support their written and spoken ideas with evidence **4.4:** Probes, extends, and clarifies student responses using effective questioning and recognition techniques **4.5:** Encourages discussion, dialogue, and debate around important ideas **4.6:** Requires students to use critical academic vocabulary in their speaking and writing **4.7:** Uses technology as a tool for fostering critical thinking, creative expression, and problem solving **4.8:** Teaches students how to use strategies on their own, as tools and frameworks for thinking and learning (e.g., moving from using Compare & Contrast to teaching students how to conduct their own comparative analyses)	• Use different forms of critical thinking • Show curiosity • Use thinking and learning strategies • Support their thinking with evidence • Use academic vocabulary • Ask meaningful questions • Challenge themselves • Apply technology in meaningful ways • Exhibit habits of mind to work through problems

Assessing Dimension Four

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Four. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
3	**Proficient:** *Clear commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices that have a positive impact on student learning.
4	**Expert:** *Strong commitment to effective instruction that shows advanced expertise*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices and is able to adapt them to students' needs and particular learning situations. These practices have a consistently positive impact on student learning.

Domain Two: The Five Episodes of Effective Instruction

At the heart of the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework is an instructional design model synthesizing the best research on how to design and deliver lessons and units that promote student learning, including Madeline Hunter's classic "Elements of Lesson Design" (1984), *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007). By synthesizing this research, we have identified five universal "episodes" that all well-designed instructional sequences include.

DIMENSION FIVE: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR NEW LEARNING

Essential Question: How does the teacher establish purpose, activate students' prior knowledge, and prepare students for learning?

Good teaching and learning start with well-defined learning goals or targets. These targets should be based on relevant standards and communicated clearly to students so they understand what they will be learning. But this episode is about more than clarifying learning targets. It is also about capturing students' interest and helping them call up what they already know about the learning to come. This episode is also a time to introduce the essential questions that will guide the learning, describe the tasks students will be expected to complete, introduce critical vocabulary, and help students pre-assess their understanding and skill levels.

To clarify what's involved in preparing students for new learning, we identified eight research-based teaching indicators and a set of student behaviors signaling that students are primed to learn.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
5.1: Selects relevant standards that are appropriate to the content and grade level **5.2:** "Unpacks" standards and turns them into clear and measurable learning goals and targets **5.3:** Poses essential questions to guide learning and promote deep thinking **5.4:** Begins lessons and units with engaging "hooks"—thought-provoking activities or questions that capture student interest and activate their prior knowledge **5.5:** Introduces students to the key vocabulary terms they will need to know and understand to successfully learn the content **5.6:** Assesses students' background knowledge, skill levels, and interests relative to learning goals and targets **5.7:** Helps students develop insights into the products they'll be creating, performances they'll be delivering, and/or tasks they'll be completing to demonstrate what they've learned (e.g., providing models of high-quality work, rubrics, checklists, etc.) **5.8:** Encourages students to develop personal learning goals and plans for achieving them	• Understand/restate learning goals in their own words • Ask questions about learning goals • Know what they have to produce and what's expected of them • Assess their own knowledge of vocabulary • Call up their prior knowledge • Generate questions about content or personal goals • Understand the plan for learning

Assessing Dimension Five

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Five. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
3	**Proficient:** *Clear commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher applies relevant instructional practices that have a positive impact on student learning.
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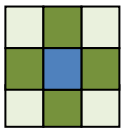

DIMENSION SIX: PRESENTING NEW LEARNING

Essential Question: How does the teacher present new information and provide opportunities for students to actively engage with content?

Once teachers have prepared students for the new learning, it's time to present the new content. Content needs to come from somewhere, whether that somewhere is a text, article, film, lecture, lab, demonstration, interview, website, or as is most likely, a combination of sources. Whatever the source(s) of information, teachers should help students actively process the content by breaking it into meaningful chunks and teaching students how to use notemaking and summarizing tools to make sense of it. Presenting new learning requires teachers to use a variety of presentation techniques, multiple sources of information, and high-quality communication skills. It also requires regular use of formative assessment techniques to check for student understanding.

To help teachers and observers better understand the classroom demands associated with the presentation of new learning, we identified eight research-based teaching indicators and a set of relevant student behaviors to look for.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
6.1: Designs lessons and units around the way the content is organized (e.g., topic-subtopic, cycle, procedural, comparison, etc.) and breaks the content up into meaningful "chunks" **6.2:** Incorporates multiple sources of information, including multimedia resources, into lessons to help students acquire new knowledge **6.3:** Demonstrates high-quality communication skills (e.g., expressive language, rich vocabulary, proper use) **6.4:** Uses a variety of presentation techniques (e.g., visuals, drama, stories, use of imagery, etc.) to make lessons vivid and memorable (*presenting declarative information*) **6.5:** Uses modeling and think-alouds to help students understand the thinking skills, processes, and procedures they'll need to master (*presenting procedural information*)	• Actively process new content (e.g., notes, questions, provisional writing) • Are able to identify big ideas and important details • Communicate about their learning • Can answer questions about their learning • Raise their own questions • Can summarize what they've learned • Make connections to the real world

6.6: Uses a variety of questions and response techniques (e.g., signaling, surveying, whiteboard-response systems, Think-Pair-Share, provisional writing) to check for understanding in real time **6.7:** Makes use of outside resources (e.g., field trips, guest speakers from community, interactive technology) to make learning authentic **6.8:** Helps students assemble big ideas and important details through notemaking, summarizing, graphic organizers, and/or other forms of linguistic and nonlinguistic representation	

Assessing Dimension Six

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Six. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
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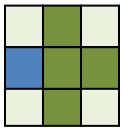

DIMENSION SEVEN: DEEPENING AND REINFORCING LEARNING

Essential Question: How does the teacher help students solidify their understanding and practice new skills?

This episode has two distinct parts, but each serves the same purpose of deepening and reinforcing the new content being learned. Let's start with practice. Practice pertains to the procedural side of knowledge—to the skills and procedures that we expect students to master. Often teachers will use modeling, think-alouds, and coaching sessions to help students develop a solid skill base, then use guided practice sessions and feedback to foster independence in applying these skills. Teaching students how to self-assess and develop goals for improvement is also an important part of the skill-acquisition process.

The other half, or part, in this episode relates to processing declarative knowledge. Declarative knowledge is information. By the time the teachers are ready to deepen and reinforce declarative learning, students have already made initial sense of the information. Now, students need to make deep meaning of it, to turn it into knowledge that they own and are ready to apply. The goal of moving students from superficial to deep understanding can be accomplished in a number of ways, from discussion and debate, to questioning techniques, to the use of thinking strategies like Compare & Contrast and Metaphorical Expression.

To help illustrate how effective teachers deepen and reinforce what students are learning, we identified eight research-based teaching indicators and a set of observable student behaviors.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
7.1: Identifies critical junctures in the learning sequence, establishing targets that students must achieve at each juncture, and uses a variety of formative assessment activities to help students assess their progress toward the targets **7.2:** Engages students in regular content-based writing that helps them clarify their thinking and deepen their understanding **7.3:** Builds in periodic review and guided practice opportunities to help students master key skills and content **7.4:** Provides clear and descriptive feedback to help students refine their use of key skills and/or deepen their comprehension **7.5:** Uses heterogeneous and homogeneous groups to maximize student learning (e.g., grouping students according to ability levels, interests, learning styles, etc.) **7.6:** Provides a wide variety of resources (e.g., manipulatives, models, learning centers, multimedia) to enhance practice and learning **7.7:** Provides students opportunities to process new knowledge deeply through questions, discussion, and critical thinking activities **7.8:** Assigns purposeful and grade-appropriate homework for students to practice and reinforce learning	• Are able to distinguish between what they know, don't know, and what they need to work on • Practice and rehearse • Use writing and thinking strategies • Display effort • Coach each other • Use feedback (what they see, hear) to assess and modify their performance • Think critically—synthesize and discuss ideas, give explanations, make new hypotheses

Assessing Dimension Seven

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Seven. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
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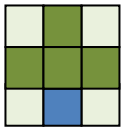

DIMENSION EIGHT: APPLYING LEARNING

Essential Question: How does the teacher help students demonstrate their learning and what kinds of evidence does the teacher collect to assess student progress?

Once students have acquired, practiced, and processed new knowledge, they need to apply it. To help students apply their learning, teachers need to think their way beyond traditional, end-of-unit tests. While we are not arguing for the eradication of such tests, we are arguing for a more balanced approach to assessment—one that challenges students with rich tasks and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in different ways.

Two important, and sometimes forgotten, elements related to this episode are self-assessment and planning. In planning their products or performances, students need to ask themselves questions like What do I need to know? What do I need to be able to do? What does success look like and how will I achieve it? Student self-assessment and planning skills are greatly enhanced when students have the opportunity to see examples of first-rate products, when teachers model the processes for developing these products, when clear criteria are presented in the form of checklists or rubrics, and when there are opportunities for students to obtain feedback from their peers and their teacher.

To better define how effective teachers help students apply their learning, we identified eight research-based teaching indicators and a set of relevant student behaviors.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
8.1: Aligns summative assessments with learning goals and targets **8.2:** Designs culminating assessments that require students to transfer their learning in meaningful ways **8.3:** Develops tasks around the kinds of writing required for college and career readiness (argument, informative/explanatory, narrative) **8.4:** Engages students in research projects that capture student interest and have relevance in the world beyond the classroom **8.5:** Challenges students to present their findings and defend their ideas **8.6:** Equips students with the planning, thinking, and self-assessment skills they need to analyze and address task demands **8.7:** Makes sure students understand what's expected of them (e.g., examining rubrics, checklists, models of exemplary work, etc.) and provides feedback as they work **8.8:** Differentiates assessment tasks so that students can show what they know in different ways	• Plan out their work • Analyze and revise their own work to improve its quality • Incorporate feedback into their revisions • Use rubrics and checklists • Develop meaningful products • Present and explain their work • Take pride in their work

Assessing Dimension Eight

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Eight. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
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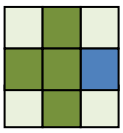

DIMENSION NINE: REFLECTING ON AND CELEBRATING LEARNING

Essential Question: How does the teacher help students look back on their learning and refine their learning process?

Deep learning requires both intimacy and distance. The previous four episodes are all about intimacy. They bring students closer and closer to what they're learning as they acquire, practice, process, and apply that learning. Reflection and celebration, on the other hand, encourage students to step back from the profusion of details, concepts, procedures, skills, and tasks to take a long view of their learning. By allowing students to survey their learning from a broader vantage point, we give them the opportunity to form generalizations, make personal connections, and ask their own questions about what they have learned. From this new vantage point, students derive deeper meaning from their learning and come to see their accomplishments as sources of personal pride.

In defining how effective teachers encourage reflection and celebration in their classrooms, we identified six research-based teaching indicators and a set of relevant student behaviors.

Instructional Indicators	Student Behaviors
9.1: Celebrates student learning and achievement **9.2:** Provides students with opportunities to look back on the content so they can make generalizations, develop new insights, and/or formulate questions **9.3:** Helps students reflect on their own learning process to identify what they did well and where they'd like to improve **9.4:** Creates an environment that takes metacognition—or thinking about thinking—seriously **9.5:** Helps students review learning goals and targets, assess their level of achievement, and "close the gap" when goals are unmet **9.6:** Works with students to set future performance goals	• Take a step back to see the big picture • Ask questions • Talk about their own learning process • Talk about the content • Make meaningful connections and generalizations • Look back at their learning goals to assess their effort and achievement • Set new goals for themselves • Compare their performance with previous performances

Assessing Dimension Nine

We can use the indicators, student behaviors, and the following rubric to assess the teacher's effectiveness in Dimension Nine. This rubric is typically used after the observer has gathered formative data through multiple observations.

1	**Novice:** *Minimal or no commitment to effective instruction*. Relevant practices are not being used or need reconsideration because they are not having their intended effects on student learning.
2	**Developing:** *Initial commitment to effective instruction*. The teacher is using relevant instructional practices, but the practices need further refinement. With refinement, the impact on student learning can be increased.
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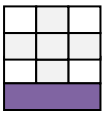
Domain Three: Effective Professional Practice (Looking Beyond the Classroom)



DIMENSION TEN: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Essential Question: How committed is the teacher to professional learning and contributing to the school community?

A comprehensive assessment of teacher effectiveness includes looking beyond the classroom. In surveying the preeminent teacher evaluation frameworks (Danielson, 2007; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008; Stronge, 2010) as well as the codes of professional responsibility developed by various state education departments and school districts, we identified three basic "commitments" that highly professional teachers exhibit:

- Commitment to professional growth
- Commitment to the school community
- Commitment to professionalism

For each of these commitments, we developed a set of indicators and a four-point rubric:

Commitment to Professional Growth	
Indicators	**Rubric**
10.1: Self-assesses and works to improve classroom practice **10.2:** Develops and implements a professional growth plan **10.3:** Seeks out professional development and continuous learning opportunities **10.4:** Works with colleagues to improve practice throughout the building	**(1) Novice:** The teacher is reluctant or resistant to professional growth. **(2) Developing:** The teacher has made an initial commitment to professional growth and applies new learning in the classroom. **(3) Proficient:** The teacher has made a clear commitment to professional growth and regularly applies new learning in the classroom. **(4) Expert:** The teacher has made a strong commitment to professional growth that is highly evident. The teacher is adept at translating new learning into improved classroom practice. In addition, the teacher has taken an active role in promoting professional learning throughout the school.

Commitment to the School Community	
Indicators	**Rubric**
10.5: Maintains open communication with the entire school community **10.6:** Assumes appropriate leadership roles **10.7:** Maintains and builds a positive school culture	**(1) Novice:** The teacher is not contributing to the school community beyond his or her classroom. **(2) Developing:** The teacher will contribute to the larger school community, but often requires prompting from colleagues or superiors. **(3) Proficient:** The teacher is a regular and active contributor to the school community. **(4) Expert:** The teacher contributes to the school community consistently and with passion and enthusiasm. The teacher is recognized as a leader and role model within the school community.

Commitment to Professionalism	
Indicators	**Rubric**
10.8: Maintains a high level of professionalism at all times **10.9:** Adheres to legal responsibilities and current educational policies	**(1) Novice:** The teacher needs to be reminded of school rules and has little to no awareness of larger educational policy (e.g., state and national initiatives). **(2) Developing:** The teacher generally follows school rules but has only a basic awareness of educational policy beyond the school walls. **(3) Proficient:** The teacher adheres to school rules and is generally aware of major changes in educational policy. **(4) Expert:** The teacher is a committed professional who follows and promotes school rules. The teacher understands the purpose of educational policies and how they affect classroom practice and the educational community.

E | Observation & Evaluation

A key goal of the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework is manageability. To help school leaders implement the TCTEF effectively and help their teachers grow, we have developed a set of leadership tools and protocols. These tools and protocols are deeply informed by our many years of work in schools, and are designed to make the key processes associated with teacher evaluation (e.g., classroom observation, collecting evidence, conducting pre- and post-observation conferences, etc.) more effective and more powerful. Among the tools and protocols built into the TCTEF are

- Teacher Self-Assessment forms and Professional Growth Plan templates to facilitate reflection and promote improvement.
- Clear and simple protocols for conducting meaningful pre- and post-observation conferences.
- A range of classroom observation forms that allow observers to conduct observations and collect classroom evidence in the ways that work best for them.
- The Four Ps to Better Feedback, a simple but powerful way to provide meaningful, growth-oriented feedback to every teacher.
- A unique way to provide targeted professional development for each teacher, using aligned instructional tools from *Tools for Thoughtful Assessment* and *Tools for a Successful School Year*.

F | Training

In order to successfully implement the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework, Silver Strong & Associates highly recommends Core Framework Training for all administrators and evaluators. This intensive and interactive four-day training is organized into two phases:

Phase I: Learning the Framework

Get started with this two-day onsite introduction to the TCTEF. School leaders will

- Learn the dimensions, indicators, and rubrics in the TCTEF.
- Use the TCTEF to conduct formal and informal observations and collect evidence of effective practice (using real classroom videos).
- Compare their evaluations with those of other administrators to begin establishing inter-rater reliability.
- Use each successive round of observation to refine their practice and calibrate their judgments.

Phase II: Applying the Framework

Learn how to implement the TCTEF school-wide and build a culture that promotes learning and professional growth. During this application session, school leaders will

- Continue their work in using video to refine their observation skills and calibrate their evaluations.
- Learn how to provide meaningful feedback to teachers.
- Learn how to conduct powerful pre- and post-observation conferences with teachers.
- Learn how to develop final evaluations of teacher effectiveness based on multiple measures.
- Explore different formats for writing up final evaluations.
- Learn how to promote teacher growth through the development of targeted professional growth plans.

Note that school leaders can receive in-person Core Framework Training through on-site professional development, multi-district consortium training, or regional training institutes.

In addition to Core Framework Training, Silver Strong & Associates offers a variety of training and coaching options to help schools and districts build comprehensive teacher evaluation systems that support continuous learning:

- Thoughtful Classroom Framework Keynote
- Thoughtful Classroom Tools Workshop
- Thoughtful Classroom Foundation Training
- PLC Training
- Advanced Observation Training
- Leadership Coaching
- Strategic Planning
- Teacher-Leadership Training
- Tools for School Leaders: Making Your Teacher Evaluation System a Success
- The CRAFT of Leadership: Developing Professional Learning Communities That Really Work
- The Three Ms of Local Assessment: Designing Local Assessments That Are Meaningful, Manageable, and Measurable
- Trust: The Secret Ingredient in Teacher Evaluation

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