Processes for maintaining quality implementation of the TAP™ elements at the building level.
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The Leadership Team:

The role of the leadership team and of the individual members within the leadership team is clearly defined by the four essential tasks of EVERY leadership team:

1) To develop and monitor progress toward meeting school plan goals leading to increased student achievement.
2) To plan for and monitor effective cluster operations that directly lead to increased teacher proficiency and student achievement in specific areas of need.
3) To plan and implement an evaluation and post-conference schedule while continually working to strengthen each team member’s skill with evaluating and conferencing, and to use the data from the evaluations to monitor and address score inflation.
4) To monitor Individual Growth Plans, how they are supported, and movement toward meeting both student achievement and teacher improvement goals.

These activities should be documented on the Leadership Team Meeting Log (see page 52). In addition to these four roles, teams may also have other areas which they address during leadership team meetings, however, the meetings must focus on factors that directly increase student achievement. If the leadership team is spending too much time on elements other than those listed above, it is very likely that the team is not focused on monitoring and implementing the various aspects of TAP, which are designed to increase student achievement. In other words, the other areas that leadership teams feel they need to address during these meetings must be in addition to the essential tasks listed above.

The Role of the Building Principal:

The principal in a TAP school must be a strong instructional leader and an expert administrator. Utilizing his or her knowledge of the TAP processes, this person advances the vision of increased student achievement. In order to do so, a TAP principal must be at least “proficient” in the following skills:

- developing an exemplary instructional and academic improvement plan,
- analyzing and communicating student progress, and
- exhibiting instructional leadership with knowledge of both quality instructional practices and curriculum.
The building principal is the primary instructional leader in a TAP school. As such, their personal involvement in TAP as a role model, communicator of the vision, and primary voice behind the school plan is significant in maintaining the quality of each of the TAP elements within the school. This is visibly evident when principals regularly:

- promote a “can-do” attitude that builds a belief among the staff that all students can achieve at higher levels and that all staff can work together to meet the school goals;
- design staff meeting activities that:
  1) use data analysis to develop cluster goals,
  2) support professional development and cluster topics,
  3) score common student assessments to ensure inter-rater reliability with state assessments,
  4) hold celebrations of “short-term wins” in student growth through reporting quarterly student growth, and
  5) foster intra-cluster communication regarding what and how they have accomplished in measurable student achievement gains;
- participate in, observe, and evaluate cluster groups followed by coaching the cluster leader;
- ask staff about their IGP progress and measurable student achievement gains;
- participate in evaluating teachers and monitor evaluation score inflation by all leadership team members;
- observe and conduct evaluation post-conferences;
- confront behaviors not aligned with the school vision or leadership team efforts to implement the school plan; and
- prominently display charts, tables, and graphs of student growth and performance.

Literature Regarding Leadership:

Although there is an abundance of literature and research that characterizes effective leadership in educational administration, a review of the literature reveals several characteristics that are repeated on a consistent basis. Authors often refer to these by different names, but a careful and thorough review reveals that the underlying tenets of many of these characteristics are in fact the same. Therefore, this review of the literature presents the five most common characteristics of strong leadership as they apply to the successful implementation of the Teacher Advancement Program because, as Maxwell (1998, p. 1) states, ”leadership ability determines a person’s level of effectiveness.” In this review, the categories are based on McEwan’s (2003) terminology, though parallels are drawn to other literature.

Communication

Effective communication, which Stephen Covey (1990, p. 237) argues is “the most important skill in life,” is key to the successful implementation of any new program. Many studies on leadership list communication as the top skill of successful leaders (McEwan, 2003; Tichy, 1997; Gardner & Laskin, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Maxwell, 1998; Sava, 1997). School principals who are highly successful communicate practically all of their working hours (Elmore, 2000). Communication is commonly viewed as how one delivers a message to others, but Diekman (1979) points out that communication is both the sending and receiving of verbal and nonverbal messages. Thus, effective communication consists of a wide variety of behaviors in addition to talking, such as listening, writing, and reading, and includes nonverbal messages in the form of body language and tone in both spoken and written language. In this respect, effective communication is an art form, a “dance of connection” according to Lerner (2001, p. 3), that coordinates all of these different skills into one complex act.
Cotton (2003), discussing the impact of leadership in school principals, combines communication with the interaction that a principal has with faculty, students, and the broader community. The combination of communication and interaction is a logical marriage, because communication is a two-way interaction; that is, messages can be stated or written, but they will not be communicated unless they are received and understood. Thus, the only way for a leader to truly know how and if a message is received is to check. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) include this notion in their description of the relationship that a school leader should have with the people associated with the school. Their assessment is that principals and other school leaders must not only communicate, but also develop relationships that allow them to evaluate the impact of that communication.

Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, and Valentine (1999) view communication as the foundation of all other leadership skills. As such, the ethical implications for a leader to be an effective communicator are enormous. A leader has a moral imperative to not only communicate, but to do so effectively and as frequently as necessary with those associated with a business, school, or other organization. In the case of a school principal, communication helps keep a school focused on its primary goal: to ensure high academic and social achievement for students. It then follows that a failure to communicate effectively could ultimately undermine the purpose of a school. For example, poor communication could lead to confusion and inefficiency among faculty members. In the absence of direction and support, teachers might be inclined to act on their own vision for the direction of the school. If multiple visions were to arise, the school would become fragmented, which could in turn hamper student education. With scenarios such as this one in mind, the importance of communication to a school leader cannot be overstated. A principal without strong communication skills is a school that cannot realize its full potential.

Vision and Building School Culture

Sergiovanni (1992, p. 57) argued, “The heart of leadership has to do with what a person believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to—the person’s personal vision.” That is, an effective leader has a compelling vision that guides daily actions. Often, that vision is so far removed from the present reality that the leader must continually articulate it. By doing so, he or she helps others participate in furthering that vision. To a successful school principal, this means having a clear vision of what the educational facility can be and communicating that vision to all stakeholders. Barth (1976) argued that the principal, more than any other person or factor, creates the culture of a school by the vision he or she articulates. An effective principal knows what a positive school culture looks like and how to use it to further the goals of the school. A clear vision coupled with a strong and positive culture is the driving force of improvement (Saphier & King, 1985).

Out of Cotton’s (2003) 25 leadership practices, four are related to vision and culture. Cotton (2003) links school culture to a positive and supportive environment in which everyone associated with the school, from students to parents and teachers, receives strong emotional and interpersonal support. Effective principals emphasize the emotional and interpersonal relationships instead of the bureaucracy (Elmore, 2000). Cotton (2003) also argues that a strong school leader will recognize the achievements of students and staff and use them to augment a positive and supportive atmosphere. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) term this ‘affirmation,’ and ‘contingent awards.’ Such a culture places a high value on school ritual, ceremony, and tradition. Cotton (2003) couples the ability to build a positive culture with vision, arguing that, to create an effective environment, a leader must have a well-developed vision that includes more than student academic achievement. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) take this a step further, explaining that a vision and a culture cannot exist solely in principle, but rather the school leader must show members of the school, through both words and actions, what traits or behaviors are valued.
Schools are in the business of people. A school leader who forgets this one simple truth is doomed for failure, which would in turn negatively affect everyone associated with the school. As with the skill of communication, a school leader who does not have a clear vision and who does not create a culture to support that vision is faced with a grave ethical dilemma, for without a vision focused on students and their achievement in a supportive culture, a leader is stripping students of a quality education. In addition, a principal who doesn’t consider school culture a priority risks placing students in an environment that may be emotionally void or even emotionally abusive. To avoid such scenarios and optimize the objectives of schools, they need to be made safe and supportive places for both students and teachers, while retaining their primary focus on student education.

Mastering Change

Fullan (2001) stated that true leaders do not overwhelm others by being superhuman or by creating dependency. They use the power of the positive culture they have developed to involve as many people as possible to attain specific goals. They respect the people who resist change, and then seek to understand and address the reasons for the resistance (McEwan, 2003). In short, leaders have to be masters of change, or as McEwan (2003) put it, change masters. Change masters are highly flexible, and they use their vision to help motivate others. They instill trust by thoughtful and consistent arguments and actions, thus enabling others to act (Kouzes & Posner, 2000). They bolster confidence in their vision by celebrating incremental steps along the way. The true change master is able to manage change so that it is organized, resulting in a more positive and powerful environment able to sustain change.

Cotton (2003) recognized that leaders who are agents of change must support risk taking, and that to do so requires building a culture open to risks. Effective principals, therefore, must show students and teachers that the school accepts and supports calculated risks aimed at achieving vision and mission. A school culture that supports risk-takers in this manner would also have to support autonomy among teachers (Cotton, 2003). Autonomy is nurtured when a leader decides to "protect those who are risk takers" (Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002, p. 618), which further empowers teachers to make decisions that are aligned with the leader's vision for the school. It is important to note, however, that such autonomy and openness also makes administrators more accessible to those who may have a different view on how to reach the vision. This should not be viewed as a disadvantage. In fact, Lashway (2001) argued that the most effective leaders are not only open to different views, but they seek them out for the purpose of expanding the available options for meeting goals. Cotton (2003) combines all of these traits—the ability to change, accept risk, and support autonomy—into one term, flexibility.

To be open to change, and know how to foster change, is only half the battle. Leaders must also demonstrate change. Leaders who do not demonstrate change risk placing those around them in a precarious situation. For example, someone who agrees that a certain change is necessary may be less likely to take steps toward making that change if there is no precedent for doing so; that is, the atmosphere may feel unsafe for risk taking. By taking risks themselves, leaders serve as examples for others and show that risk taking is valued, thereby making others more willing to follow suit. Just as important, however, is the way a leader reacts to failure. The effective leader will use failure as a learning tool and a model to inform others how to activate change successfully. This would not only further encourage risk taking, but also provide a solid model of action in the face of challenge.

Producing Results

The role of producer in an educational setting shares many common traits with that in the business world, although some of the descriptions are specialized to the specific profession. Producers are focused on results (Sergiovanni, 2000; Sava, 1997). They clearly identify and communicate the desired end-product and do not confuse activity for achievement (Maxwell,
In schools, the producer chooses which activities to include in the curriculum, based on research and the likelihood the activity will lead to the ultimate goal of furthering education. Producers must have clear visions to make the best possible decisions, all of which are driven by data.

Multiple categories in Cotton (2003) included elements of the producer characteristic. For example, Cotton (2003) described the effective school leader as one whose instructional leadership pushes teachers to pursue high standards of learning through a continuously improved process driven by data. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) describe effective leaders as those who know what they want and then construct a focused and systematic plan to reach it. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) similarly emphasized the importance of focus, a major characteristic of a producer, to a school leader. A strong focus on objectives and goals drives all of the decisions of a successful principal. However, to accomplish the goals, he or she must also focus staff on the latest educational research associated with the goals (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). To do this successfully, the principal must become directly involved in the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of the school. Thus, while administrators do need to manage and direct staff, their primary responsibility should be understanding and becoming involved in the subject matter and pedagogy of the school (Stein & D'Amico, 2000). When this is done, the faculty will be inspired to “accomplish things that might [otherwise] be beyond their grasp” (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

At a basic level, a school leader is hired to get results with student achievement. Therefore, the school leader who accepts pay but focuses primarily on something other than student achievement could be considered, ethically speaking, a fraud. That is not to say that other aspects of school, staff, and students should not be important to a school leader, but achievement has to be the top priority.

**Facilitating Cooperation**

The final characteristic of strong leadership included in this review is the ability to facilitate cooperation among others, or take on the role of facilitator (McEwan 2003). Facilitators couple a clear vision with a positive environment to build strong relationships (McEwan, 2003), striving to make people feel a part of the community or team. They exhibit strong interpersonal skills, which they use to improve the team and bolster confidence. Facilitators are not afraid to share power, because they realize that by doing so, it multiplies (McEwan, 2003; Maxwell, 1998; Tichy, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sergiovanni, 2000). They also spend time with people, not to monitor or evaluate them, but to develop relationships and trust. By getting to know individuals and their talents, the school facilitator has a better understanding of how to utilize those talents to meet school goals and share power in ways that benefit the entire team, namely, by helping to reach the desired results and vision.

Cotton (2003) further defines a facilitator as one who shares leadership, encourages teacher autonomy, and promotes collaboration throughout the school. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) argue that facilitators cannot operate in a vacuum. To foster collaboration, they say, the school leader must create a shared leadership and a supportive culture, and be adept at communicating. This can only happen when the leader actively and openly solicits input and adopts a “participative management” style (De Pree, 1989, p. 24).

The primary ethical dilemma that leaders face as facilitators is that of their own beliefs. To foster a culture that truly values teacher involvement in all parts of the school’s operation, leaders must not only truly believe in that method (or at least not be morally opposed to it) but also be willing to accept it, even if they do not fully agree with it 100 percent of the time. Finally, for leaders to retain the confidence and support of others, their actions must match their words; that is, they need to not only practice what they preach, but follow through on agreements and serve as examples.
Conclusions from the Literature

Each of the five characteristics discussed herein depends on the others, as well as a vast array of additional leadership skills. While an effective leader must have each of these skills, what is important is how they are merged into one powerful effect. For example, an excellent communicator without a clear vision cannot be effective. Likewise, having a clear vision that is clearly communicated is worthless if a leader is unable to build a supportive and positive culture that functions as a team. In addition, if the vision is not based on the goals of the organization, which for the purposes of this discussion is the school, then the leader would be guiding the group in a direction that could jeopardize everyone involved and the organization itself. In summary, an effective leader is a communicator and a visionary who has mastered change, and knows how to produce results and facilitate cooperation. Successful leaders recognize this and work to implement these five characteristics on a daily basis. Maxwell (2000) contends that success is ultimately found in our daily actions.

The Role of the Master Teacher:

Master teachers function in a unique manner relative to the traditional teacher. Working with the principal, the master teacher’s primary role is to analyze student data, as well as to create and institute an academic achievement plan for the building. Master teachers lead cluster groups and provide demonstration lessons, coaching, and team-teaching to career teachers. They also spend, on average, two hours per day teaching students. Master teachers collaborate to determine and to develop the adoption of learning resources and curriculum. They are partners with the principal in evaluating other teachers. Master teachers may also partner with the principal in sharing some of the responsibility of interacting with parents.

The master teachers are charged with “making it happen” by turning the school plan into action. Their duties include five main areas:

1) Leadership Team Participation
   - Responsible for the overall TAP implementation. Monitor goal setting, activities, classroom follow-up and goal attainment for cluster groups and individual growth plans. Assess teacher evaluation results and maintain inter-rater reliability.

2) Research
   - Locate research based strategies that will support student achievement in the identified areas of student need as revealed from the analysis of data.

3) Cluster Group Planning and Implementation
   - Jointly develop, with mentor teachers, weekly cluster group agendas and activities. Co-lead and attend selected cluster meetings weekly. Assess all cluster group progress toward goals utilizing student data.

4) Individual Growth Plan Management
   - Assist teachers in developing goals and check progress toward goals at evaluation post conference. Provide training, resources, and support for meeting goals.
5) Evaluations and Conferencing

- Conduct classroom evaluations and conferences for both formal and informal observations.

6) Classroom Follow-up

- Provide support to career teachers as it relates to cluster and IGP learning. This includes observations and feedback, model teaching (i.e. demonstration lessons), and team teaching.

The Role of the Mentor Teacher:

Mentor teachers are actively involved in enhancing and supporting the career teachers’ teaching experience. Through the leadership team, they participate in analyzing student data and creating academic achievement plans. With oversight and support from the master teacher, they lead cluster meetings and as a result, mentor teachers provide classroom-based follow-up and extensive feedback on career teachers’ instructional practices. With the input and guidance of the master teacher, mentor teachers plan for instruction in partnership with other mentor teachers and career teachers. Mentor teachers also engage in self- and team-directed professional development activities.

Mentor teachers have many of the same responsibilities as master teachers, but the quantity and frequency of those responsibilities is lessened. For example, while a master teacher may conduct 25 evaluations in a given school, the mentor may have only eight. The master teacher may be responsible for planning and facilitating four cluster meetings while the mentor teacher may co-plan or facilitate one cluster with the master. A mentor teacher’s duties include:

1) Leadership Team Participation

- Responsible for the overall TAP implementation. Monitor goal setting, activities, classroom follow-up and goal attainment for cluster groups and individual growth plans. Assess teacher evaluation results and maintain inter-rater reliability.

2) Cluster Group Planning and Implementation

- Jointly develop with master teachers weekly cluster group agendas and activities. Co-lead weekly cluster meetings. Maintain cluster group records.

3) Individual Growth Plan Support

- Provide material resources, ideas, and suggestions for achieving individual growth plan goals.

4) Evaluations and Conferencing

- Conduct formal and informal classroom evaluations and conferences.

5) Coaching

- Regularly work with career teachers to provide follow-up coaching related to cluster group learning or on individual teaching skills based on evaluation data.
6) Team Teaching and Planning

- Model or team teach in area of expertise as called for by cluster group goals or individual teacher goals.

These areas illustrate the overall day-to-day duties that master and mentor teachers conduct. It is important to note that schools need to demonstrate flexibility in defining and adjusting the explicit responsibilities and assignment loads for master and mentor teachers, so that the specific needs of the students and teachers at THAT school are met.

The Leadership Team Checklist

The Leadership Team Checklist was created to assist the leadership team members in “covering all the bases”, while providing a general timeline to develop, monitor, and evaluate future school plans and goals.

***NOTE: The checklist presented here is a suggested support tool. It is not a requirement.

This chart is intended to guide leadership teams in their major tasks and responsibilities associated with TAP. Please use this as a suggested organizational tool; it is not a required document.

The term “monitor” is defined as formative, periodic checking for the quality and effectiveness of the process. “Evaluate” refers to a summative action; it is defined as assessing the overall effectiveness for the year in order to use the information in developing a plan for the following year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Leadership Team Checklist</th>
<th>School Plan and Goals</th>
<th>To assess progress to meet school plan goals leading to significant growth in student achievement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyse student data to create the school academic achievement plan and goals</strong></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Summer</td>
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<td>Develop (for the following school year)</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
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<th>Build Leadership Team knowledge and skills in (including, but not limited to the following elements):</th>
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<td>Leadership skills</td>
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<td>Coaching/communication skills</td>
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<td>Content area knowledge</td>
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<td>Instructional knowledge</td>
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<td>Leadership Team Meeting Log</td>
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<td>Use of the TAP Handbook</td>
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<td>Dates and action plan for extended calendar</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Build career teacher knowledge and skills in:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>STEPS for Effective Learning</td>
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<td>School Academic Achievement Plan</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Monitor</strong></th>
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<td>Develop</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
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## Cluster Operations
To implement effective clusters that lead to increased teacher proficiency and student achievement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build leadership team knowledge and skills in:</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Master/mentor roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cluster Meeting Records</td>
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<td>• Long Range Plans</td>
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<th>Build career teacher knowledge and skills in:</th>
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<td>• Cluster protocols</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
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<td>• Use of formative assessment</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assess the impact of cluster learning on student achievement gains:</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Yearly cluster goals</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
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<td>• Cluster cycle goals</td>
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<td>• Cluster outcomes and activities</td>
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<td>• Master/mentor follow-up</td>
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<th>Guide and monitor data-driven cluster groups so that clusters practice:</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Use of assessments that measure periodic growth (e.g. pre- to post tests, quarterly assessments)</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
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<td>• Examination of student work to drive cluster learning</td>
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<td>• Examination of student work to inform instruction</td>
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<td>• Use of research-based strategies</td>
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<td>• Use of critical attributes</td>
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## Individual Growth Plans
To monitor IGPs in an effort to meet student achievement goals and teacher improvement goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build career teacher knowledge of IGPs via:</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Periodic IGP conferences</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Post conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Integrating portfolios or other instructional growth systems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Evaluation Processes**

To strengthen team member evaluation and conferencing skills and to use evaluation data to monitor and prevent score inflation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Build Leadership Team knowledge of:**

- DVD library
- Teacher Evaluation and Performance Award Guide (TEPAG)
- Preparing and Becoming a Certified TAP Evaluator

**Build career teacher knowledge of:**

- TAP Instructional Rubric
- Evaluation policies and procedures
- Value-added calculations
- Bonus pay-out process and procedures

**Inform teachers of their individual award based on:**

- Evaluation scores (spring)  Develop/Evaluate
- Student achievement data (fall)  Develop/Evaluate

**Evaluation processes:**

- Schedule evaluations  Develop/Monitor/Evaluate
- Sustain inter-rater reliability and prevent “score inflation”  Develop/Monitor/Evaluate
- Evaluate post-conference quality  Develop/Monitor/Evaluate
- Compare value-added calculations to evaluation ratings from previous year  Evaluate
- Maintain confidential record-keeping of evaluations  Develop/Monitor/Evaluate

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**Planning for and Monitoring Cluster Operations**

**The SCHOOL PLAN: Structural Support focusing Ongoing Applied Professional Growth on Student Achievement**

**Statement of Purpose**

The school achievement plan comprehensively addresses how teachers and the leadership team will increase student achievement on the end-of-year assessments. The plan focuses on achieving annual student goals through the application of research-based, field tested instructional student strategies and measuring student progress in achieving those goals via benchmark assessments, teacher-made assessments, and ongoing formative assessments that are aligned to the high stakes test. The school plan is a *living* document that provides the focus and direction for the school. It is the “map” clusters use to guide members to reach the
school goal “destination.” If student needs change, then the “map” for how to get to the “destination” should change as well.

Leadership team members use the school plan to regularly monitor progress toward meeting the measurable student achievement goals using frequent measures of student performance in specific skills. Leadership team members should include formal assessments, such as benchmark exams to measure periodic progress, but they should also include ongoing examination of student work through the application of research-based, field tested instructional strategies in the classroom. The school plan should also be used to monitor the quality and effectiveness of TAP processes (Cluster, IGP, mentor/master support, and evaluation processes) and the development of the STEPS for Effective Learning within these processes.

Ultimately, the school plan should help teachers answer the following three questions before the administration of the high stakes test:

1) How do you use assessment data to drive instructional improvement?
2) Will your students show growth on specific areas of the annual state assessment?
3) Based on your assessment data, how do you know that your students continuously grow in their academic performance?

Critical Elements of an Effective School Plan

Please see Section 2, Part A - Cluster Documentation for an explanation of the critical elements of an effective school plan. Not all school plans will look the same. School plans vary depending on the size, configuration of the school, and the individual student needs within it. Effective school plans, however, all share very important characteristics:

- Goals - aligned at multiple levels within the school
- Assessments - aligned at multiple levels within the school
- Alignment between the goals and assessments being used
- Strategies-proven to effectively increase student achievement in the identified area of academic need.

While these are general characteristics, a more detailed explanation of specific elements is provided in the following sections. The more specific the school plan, the better clusters will be able to increase student achievement. The focus for clusters is on strategies designed to meet the needs revealed by the analysis of student work. This requires that the assessments and strategies be carefully aligned with the school and cluster goals, and ultimately with the high-stakes test.

Examining Critical Elements of a School Plan

The critical elements of an effective school plan should:

- State a school goal based on high stakes test (state or district test).
- Include yearly cluster goals aligned to school goal.
- Include cluster cycle goals aligned to yearly cluster goals and school goals.
- Include student strategies in each cluster that will be implemented to support cluster cycle goals.
- Include pre- and post-data for students’ performance prior to each cluster cycle and at the end of each cluster cycle.
Note: All decisions regarding whether to move to another segment of a strategy or a new strategy should be based on student data.

Graphically representing the work of clusters in the way that the example on the following pages does also serves to streamline communication throughout the school. By visually focusing the work of each cluster group, all teachers can see where the school is moving. This helps move the school plan into a plan of action.

Levels of Goals within the School Plan:

Goals within the school must be based on specific student needs and written in terms of measurable student outcomes. The more specific the goals within the school, the closer the teachers get to the level of classroom application for improvement of student learning.

The school plan applies three levels of goals to bring into focus identified instructional and student needs:

1) School-wide goals
2) Yearly cluster goals
3) Cluster cycle goals in a more specific area within their yearly goal

It is imperative that a school aligns these three levels of goals. By doing so, the leadership team ensures that the cluster-level or classroom-level work translates to overall success on the school goal. This alignment should be consistently communicated to all cluster members to focus the work toward improved achievement. An example of each goal level is provided below.

School-wide Goals

School goals identify general trends among large groups of students and overall achievement levels within sub-groups of students in the school. Often times, they are aligned to the requirements of meeting the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) target.

School goals effectively communicate the overall achievement level of the school. However, due to the distance from individual student needs, the school goals are not specific enough to accurately define and measure the work done in cluster. Because of this, they move the leadership team towards defining more specific yearly cluster goals and cluster cycle goals matched directly to cluster members’ individual students.

The critical elements of a school goal are:

- The goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test).
- The goal is based on area of students’ greatest academic need (language arts, math, etc.).
- The goal is measurable.
- The goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students.

An example of a clearly written school goal is:

**School Goal: Based on 2004 – 2005 state ELA test results:**

- Grade 4 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 17% proficient to 20% proficient, 35% basic to 45% basic, and 45% below basic will decrease to 35% below basic.*
• Grade 5 students will increase from 1 % advanced to 3 % advanced, 5% proficient to 8 % proficient, 38% basic to 48% basic, and 56% below basic will decrease to 46% below basic.*

• Grade 6 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 13% proficient to 16 % proficient, 38% basic to 46 % basic, and 56 % below basic will decrease to 48 % below basic. *

All students will increase their scores 105 scale score points (a year’s growth is represented by 100 points and 5 points represents ½ of the next proficiency level).

*These increases and decreases in percentages of students at each proficiency level will allow the school to meet its AYP target.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Element: The School Goal is...</th>
<th>Evidence from the goal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on a high stakes test</td>
<td>“2004-2005 state ELA test results”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on area of students’ greatest academic need</td>
<td>English Language Arts (ELA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>Includes growth goal using data from 2003-2004 ELA state test. Is measured by the increase in the percentage of students at advanced, proficient, and basic and the decrease in the percentage of students at below basic. Is disaggregated by grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students</td>
<td>See evidence above. Also, the school goal includes the information that 100 points plus 5 points equates at least one years’ growth and growth of half a proficiency level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yearly Cluster Goals**

Yearly cluster goals are aligned to the school-wide goals and are made measurable using periodic benchmark or teacher-made assessments. They move the broad school goal to a more focused one. Yearly cluster goals are a means of measuring how students are progressing toward meeting the school goal. In order to act as predictors for how students are progressing towards the school goal, the benchmarks and/or assessments need to be **aligned** to the high stakes test against which the school goal is being measured. Each cluster group in a school has its own yearly cluster goal.

**Cluster Cycle Goals**

Within the course of a year, a cluster group engages in several cluster cycles. Each cluster cycle has its own goal. Cluster cycle goals are subject to change as new information from the benchmarks becomes available. If the information stemming from the benchmark assessments is not specific, timely, or available, then information from teacher-made assessments is needed to establish cluster cycle goals.

Cluster cycle goals are established using the assessment data available specific to the cluster members’ individual students. This specificity should allow teachers to make quality instructional decisions about what interventions are needed to best address student needs.
SAMPLE SCHOOL PLAN

School Goal
Based on 2004 – 2005 state English Language Arts (ELA) test results, by May 2006,
- Students in grade 6 will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 17% proficient to 20% proficient, 35% basic to 45% basic, and 45% below basic will decrease to 35%*
- Students in grade 7 will increase from 1% advanced to 3% advanced, 5% proficient to 8% proficient, 38% basic to 48% basic, and 56% below basic will decrease to 48% below basic*
- Students in grade 8 will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 13% proficient to 16 % proficient, 38% basic to 46 % basic, and 56 % below basic will decrease to 48 % below basic.*

In addition, all students will show at least one year’s growth plus 5 to 10 scaled points (5 to 10 points represents growth of half of a proficiency level.)

* These increases and decreases in percentages of students at each proficiency level will allow the school to meet its AYP target.

Annual Cluster Goal

By May 2006, all students will improve performance on the benchmark ELA test, which is aligned to the state ELA test, by at least 10%, with students performing at the highest proficiency level maintaining their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching making inferences, sequencing, and the writing process. **

Cluster Cycle Goals

CYCLE 1: By the end of the cluster cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency level on a teacher-made writing assessment in the area of organization, using the State Writing Rubric. This growth will support students in improving scores by 10% on the benchmark ELA test, with students performing at the highest level maintaining their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching organization in the writing process supported by teacher modeling.

CYCLE 2: By the end of the cluster cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency level on a teacher-made writing assessment in the area of voice, using the State Writing Rubric with students at the highest proficiency level maintaining their scores. This growth will support students in improving scores by 10% on the benchmark ELA test due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching voice in the writing process supported by the use of visuals.

CYCLE 3: By the end of the cluster cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency level in making inferences on a teacher-made pre-to-post reading assessment aligned to the state ELA test, with students at the highest proficiency level maintaining their scores. This growth will support students in improving scores by 10% on the benchmark ELA test, due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching making inferences as supported by high level questioning with attention to the instructional goals.

CYCLE 4: By the end of the cluster cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency level in sequencing of events on a teacher-made pre-to-post reading assessment aligned to the state ELA test, with students already scoring at the highest level maintaining their scores. This growth will support students in improving scores by 10% on the benchmark ELA test as supported by high quality academic feedback with attention to the instructional goals.

**Data from Benchmark Test (at the beginning of the year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Score on Rubric for Making Inferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 out of 118 students</td>
<td>4 90 – 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 out of 118 students</td>
<td>3 80 – 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 out of 118 students</td>
<td>2 70 – 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 out of 118 students</td>
<td>1 below 70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Type</th>
<th>Critical Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| School Goal | • The goal is based on a high stakes test (state or district test).  
• The goal is based on an area of students’ greatest academic need (language arts, math, etc.).  
• The goal is measurable. |
The goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students.

- Goal is aligned and supports school goal.
- Goal is measurable.
- Goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students.
- Goal is based on improving student achievement in specific areas of need that will support them in improving in area referenced in school goal.
- Goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test) but is measured by benchmark tests throughout the year.

Taken from school goal on previous two pages:

**CYCLE 1:** By the end of the cluster cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency level on a teacher-made narrative writing assessment in the area of organization, using the State Writing Rubric. This growth will support students in improving scores by 10% on the benchmark ELA test, with students performing at the highest level maintaining their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching organization in the writing process supported by teacher modeling.

You will notice in the above example that although the yearly cluster goal was to increase student achievement in the area of organization, this skill was not taught in a vacuum. Rather, the goal of increasing students’ ability to organize their writing was folded into the existing curriculum needs of the persuasive writing genre. Making this connection ensures that teachers have a means of assessing the effectiveness of the interventions and therefore increases the likelihood that increased student achievement will occur.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that each of the goals is written in measurable terms using reliable testing measures. For example, the school goal(s) and the yearly cluster goals are written using the state test or a district benchmark (for more frequent and specific data) as the measure. Cluster cycle goals are typically created using school or district benchmark or teacher-made assessments that are aligned to the state test. For grades that do not have the state test or benchmarks, the leadership team should work to identify or create assessments that do align to how students will ultimately be held accountable. (Refer to page 21-23, and page 27 on Assessment.)
Level of Assessment within the School Plan

Ultimately, the leadership team should consider the following essential questions:

- How do you use assessment data to drive instructional improvement?
- Will my students show growth on the annual state assessment based on the interventions, benchmark data, and teacher made test data? How do I know?
- How do I know that my students are continuously growing in their academic performance?

The school plan applies the following three levels of assessments to bring into focus instructional needs and to measure student gains:

1) State/District Level Assessments
2) School/Benchmark Assessments
3) Teacher-Made Classroom Assessments including daily formative assessments

It is important to note that for these assessments to be utilized as predictors of students’ progress toward reaching the school goal; they must be aligned to each other and to the high stakes test.

The following graphic demonstrates the use of these three levels of assessments to narrow the focus of cluster work on a specific identified student need:

Each level of assessment is cyclical; they serve as a pre- and post- test, allow application of the STEPS for Effective Learning (see page 29), and focus the work within cluster. The leadership team members can measure the effectiveness of the plan by looking at each level of assessment. Results should always be reported in terms of increased student performance levels and growth rather than averages, so that no student’s growth is “masked” by the average.

State/District Assessments

In TAP schools, annual state or district assessments are used to:
1) Establish school-wide goals.
2) Measure annual growth of students.
3) Point in the direction of possible school-wide instructional needs.

Example:

The leadership team analyzes the data from the state test to identify that, while students are making gains in other content areas, reading comprehension is the area of the lowest student gains. Reading comprehension is the focus of the school goal. The results within this area of need indicate that:

- 3% of students scored Advanced
- 15% of students scored Proficient
- 22% of students scored Basic
- 60% of students scored Below Basic

Furthermore, information provided by the state reveals that the reading comprehension section requires higher level thinking to be applied within the three main skill areas tested:

- ✓ main idea/relevant details (5% Advanced, 19% Proficient, 28% Basic, 48% Below Basic)
- ✓ making inferences (2% Advanced, 13% Proficient, 35% Basic, 50% Below Basic)
- ✓ summarizing text (3% Advanced, 10% Proficient, 22% Basic, 65% Below Basic)

However, due to the way state test results are reported, the team still does not know the specific errors students are making within the above categories.

The leadership team decides to develop and administer a benchmark test at the beginning of the year developed from released state-test items. This benchmark measures student performance in the areas listed above, but allows the team to pinpoint the specific problems students are having with each of these skills. The benchmark data confirms the problems that were found through the analysis of the state test data. The leadership team will use this benchmark as a periodic measure of student progress throughout the year.

Through the administration of the benchmark test, the leadership team finds that the area of lowest performance was making inferences. However, they decided to begin working on identifying main idea and relevant details, since that skill is used to make an inference. They also used the data from the benchmark as their pre-test data since it was aligned to the state test isolated specific problems students were having with identifying main idea and supporting details.

School/District Benchmark Assessments

After the state or district assessments have pointed you towards the school-wide direction of student need, school or benchmark assessments are used to:

- Establish yearly and cycle cluster goals.
- Measure periodic (quarterly) progress toward the yearly growth goals.
- Point you in the direction of more specific instructional needs, drawing cluster members closer to classroom application.
Teacher-Made Classroom Assessments

When benchmark data is not specific enough or too much time has passed from the time of administration for its data to be pertinent, teachers give a pre-assessment aligned to the high stakes test that is directly focused on the specific, identified area of need. This is a type of formative assessment.

NOTE: The two types of assessment – summative and formative--are both used to guide cluster.

Regular teacher-made classroom assessments are used to:

- Establish cluster cycle goals.
- Serve as pre/post measures of student growth for a specific identified purpose.
- Identify specific students to target for instructional grouping and interventions.
- Continually monitor student gains as a result of the strategies implemented and to provide direction for cluster group work and Individual Growth Plans.

NOTE: Formative assessments do not have to be formal tests or extended performance tasks. They can include oral responses, exit tickets, homework assignments, or small components of a larger task.

However, the results of any type of assessment need to be:

- aligned to benchmark pre/post tests,
- quantified so they can be used to make well-founded instructional decisions, and
- assessed in terms of individual students versus groups or whole classes.

School Plan Template Example

The following page contains an example of a school plan as it relates to the 3rd, 4th, 5th grade cluster goals. This example also contains coaching comments (indicated in red).

The School Plan is a living document – evolutionary and summative accountability all in the same. Therefore, in this example, the leadership team works together to determine priority needs identified from data and the cluster leader uses the Long Range Plans to initially plan for what will be done in the cycle. S/he then updates the plan after each cycle to report to the school and leadership team the results of the cluster work on student progress toward the goal.

| 1st Cycle Goal: by 12/04, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching Number Sense, Concepts, Algebraic Thinking through Presenting | 2nd Cycle Goal: by 12/04, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching Algebraic Thinking through Presenting | 3rd Cycle Goal: by 5/05, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching geometry and Spatial Sense through |

Do not duplicate without permission.
and Operations through Activities and Materials. **Goal is aligned to school and cluster goal and is focused on specific area of student need with support from TAP Instructional Rubric.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cluster Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cluster Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cluster Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family recipe cross-curriculum strategy and feedback</td>
<td>5. Number Pattern Card strategy and feedback.</td>
<td>5. Writing through geometry strategy and feedback.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Focus:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities and Materials</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre:**

**1st Cycle Goal:** by 12/04, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching Number Sense, Concepts, and Operations through Activities and Materials. **Goal is aligned to school and cluster goal and is focused on specific area of student need with support from TAP Instructional Rubric.**

**Post:**

**2nd Cycle Goal:** by 12/04, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching Algebraic Thinking through Presenting Instructional Content. **Goal is aligned to school and cluster goal and is focused on specific area of student need with support from TAP Instructional Rubric.**

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Questioning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre:**

**3rd Cycle Goal:** by 5/05, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching geometry and Spatial Sense through Questioning. **Goal is aligned to school and cluster goal and is focused on specific area of student need with support from TAP Instructional Rubric.**

**Post:**

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24

Do not duplicate without permission.
### School Goal:
Third, fourth and fifth grade students will increase from 78% to 83% scoring at or above level 3, proficiency, on the state test in Math. All students will demonstrate an annual learning gain. Students at the advanced level (5) will maintain their level. Students in the bottom quartile will advance by 25% within that quartile or will advance to the next level. **All students will demonstrate at least one year’s growth. School goal is based on high stakes test and includes growth for students in all performance levels.**

### Annual Cluster Goal 3-5 Math & Content Cluster:
by June, 2005 all 3-5 grade students will demonstrate an annual learning gain in Algebraic Thinking as measured by district benchmarks test aligned to high stakes test. Students already at the advanced level will maintain their level (5). Students in the bottom quartile will increase by 25% within that quartile or will advance to the next level. All students will demonstrate at least a year’s growth. **Cluster goal is based on district benchmark aligned to high stakes test. Goal includes increases in performance levels and growth for all students.**

### Pre:
- Examine Performance Levels/Assessment Tools.
- Model Piece-Pair Problem solving strategy and feedback.
- Multiplication Fact Booklet Strategy and feedback.
- Generate factors strategy and feedback.
- Family recipe cross-curriculum strategy and feedback.
- Examine post performance levels.

### Post:
- Examine post performance levels.

### Rubric Focus:
- Activities and Materials
- Thinking
- Questioning

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Cycle Goal: by 12/04, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching Number Sense, Concepts, and Operations through Activities and Materials.</th>
<th>2nd Cycle Goal: by 12/04, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching Algebraic Thinking through Presenting Instructional Content.</th>
<th>3rd Cycle Goal: by 5/05, teachers will demonstrate proficiency in teaching geometry and Spatial Sense through Questioning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal is aligned to school and cluster goal and is focused on specific area of student need with support from TAP Instructional Rubric.</strong></td>
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### Process for Developing a School Plan:
- Disaggregate state assessment data by all sub-groups to identify specific areas of student academic need.
- Rank sub-skill areas reported in state assessment data in order of priority.
- Examine state assessment data with the previous class lists to identify areas of growth, little growth, or no growth.
- Examine state assessment data using new class rosters in cluster groups to identify students’ highest priority needs for the coming year.
- Prioritize needs within cluster groups to establish yearly cluster goals; designate their order based on the greatest student academic need. (see school plan) (Keep in mind that cycle cluster goals are typically based on aligned benchmark tests and not the state test because of the need to have the data sooner and on a more regular basis.)
- For students in grades that are not tested by the state test, look for patterns in the tested areas which may point to student areas of need in the non-tested grades. This can also be substantiated with benchmark and teacher-made test data.
- Determine pre/post assessment methods aligned with state test (or to the test to which students will ultimately be held accountable) to further demonstrate and diagnose specific problems within the student need (pretest) and measure growth at the end of a designated time of cluster work (post-test).

At the End of each quarter:

- Conduct a staff meeting where clusters report their results to other cluster groups (“short-term wins”) as a celebration of their work and sharing of commitment for the process, along with progress toward meeting student achievement goals.

Scenarios for Leadership Team Meetings Around the School Plan

Creating a school goal:

As soon as the high stakes test data is returned to the school, the leadership team should plan meetings aimed at disaggregating the data to find patterns within it. Those patterns will be used to write the school goal(s).

- For example, the outcome of one meeting focused on creating the school goal could be, “By the end of the meeting, the leadership team will prioritize the needs in 4th grade Mathematics by grade level, class, and sub-group.”

The leadership team would spend the meeting clearly identifying the specific areas of need by analyzing the 4th grade data. The leadership team would combine the resulting data with other student data from outcomes to create the school plan. The follow-up to the meeting could be varied, depending on what the team plans to do at the next meeting.

- Two examples of follow-up may be, “Leadership team members will apply the process used in the meeting to a grade level and subject area, and bring the results to the next leadership team in order to make decisions regarding the school goal” or “Leadership team members will apply the process to other test data (such as a nationally norm-referenced test) to determine if the same patterns of student strength and relative weakness apply to that test also in order to make decisions regarding the school goals.”
Notice how the outcome directly relates to the follow-up in establishing a clear purpose for the leadership team’s work. The same purposefulness is true for effective cluster meeting outcomes and follow-up.

**Creating cluster goals**

Once each grade level and subject area had been analyzed to pinpoint the areas of student strength and relative weakness, the patterns that arise will allow the leadership team to set the goal(s) for the school.

- For that meeting, the outcome may be, “By the end of the meeting, leadership team members will use the data to write the school goals, each cluster’s annual goals, and each cluster’s first cycle goal.”

The follow-up would then be for the leadership team members to research and field test the strategies or to complete the plans for the first cluster cycle that they lead/co-lead and bring these plans to the next leadership team meeting.

**Monitoring the School Goal**

Leadership team meetings throughout the year, especially just after benchmark tests are administered, should focus on measuring how well students are making progress toward meeting the school goals, as well as how teachers are making adjustments as necessary.

- For example, a leadership team meeting outcome may be, “By the end of the meeting, the team will identify students who are not making appropriate progress toward meeting the school goal based on benchmark results. The leadership team will plan appropriate interventions for these students to be addressed in cluster and on Individual Growth Plans.”

The follow-up could be, “The leadership team members will integrate the interventions into cluster and into the IGP’s and bring back examples to the next leadership team meeting.” It is imperative that the leadership team analyze progress toward meeting the school goal after each administration of benchmark tests or writing prompts and make adjustments as needed.

**Assessment – Measurement of Learning**

The tool for improving teaching and learning:
Statement of Purpose:

Leaders recognize the value of assessment to improve teaching and learning. They establish a system for improving teaching in learning through a focused school plan, an accountability system giving significant attention to classroom assessment, data analysis and subsequent improvements in teaching and curriculum.

One of the most important techniques in raising student achievement is the strategic use of the many levels and types of assessments.

Schools use the three levels of assessment to drive the activities of the Ongoing Applied Professional Development activities:

1) State/District Assessments – measure annual growth and point the school in a direction of possible instructional needs.
2) School or Benchmark Assessments – common assessments within a grade level or cluster team serve as in-process measures of growth and point the school in the direction of more specific learning needs.
3) Teacher Made Assessments – serve as frequent sources of information regarding specific instructional needs.

Note: We define the following assessment terms here for the purposes of establishing common language within and among TAP schools, recognizing that what these terms mean varies from school to school.

Leaders in TAP schools must be knowledgeable and make use of each of these levels of assessment. To do so, they need to know how and when to apply each appropriately.

1) Diagnostic assessment – designed to determine the cause of persistent problems in learning or to enable teachers to formulate plans for remediation
2) Pre-assessment – occurs before instruction begins informing the teacher where to start and how best to teach (identifying instructional needs)
3) Formative assessment – ongoing, providing continuous feedback to students and teachers monitoring student progress during instruction (source of academic feedback). Changes instruction as a result.
4) Summative assessment – the final task at the end of a unit, course or semester (assigning a grade or report)

Process for using assessment to improve teaching and learning:

At the beginning of a cycle:
- Leaders examine state and/or district assessment data, disaggregate the data by sub-groups and identify the major areas of need for instruction
- Leaders identify and prioritize specific areas of need and develop pre/post assessments to drive the work of cluster groups

Throughout each cycle:
- Teachers use formative assessments (i.e. anecdotal notes, quizzes, oral responses, parts of a project, tests) in order to guide the need for additional learning and modifications.

At the end of each cycle:
- Leadership team members and teachers analyze results from the post-test data, reflect on successes, and discern necessary “next steps”. This could mean an adjustment to the school plan if the next area of need that was identified at the beginning of the school year is no longer the area of greatest need for the next cycle.
Examples of Assessments by Level:

**State/District Assessments**
- State Tests,
- Benchmark Tests,
- Standardized Tests

**School or Benchmark Assessments**
- Quarterly Benchmark Tests, NWEA Tests, District Benchmarks,
- Standards-Based Performance Assessments,
- Performance Tasks, Essays, Multiple Choice Tests,
- Running Records, Informal Reading Inventories,
- Common Assessments for a unit/course,
- Computerized assessments, other….

**Teacher-Made Assessments**
- Quarterly Benchmark Tests,
- Standards Performance Assessments,
- Performance Tasks, Common Assessments,
- Running Records, Checklists,
- Anecdotal logs of characteristics/observations
- Interviews, Essays, Multiple Choice Tests, components of any of the above, other.

Note: Collaborative examination of student work and collectively determining what “proficiency” really means is one of the most effective ways of ensuring success within the school. Teachers are better able to collaborate in instructional matters when they have agreed on certain characteristics or criteria of acceptable student work aligned to state standards and assessments. However, this is more than “talking about student work.” It is using the work to identify patterns and trends of strengths and weaknesses, and then using proven, field-tested best practices to isolate and attack student learning problems.
Cluster – The Basic Unit of Ongoing Applied Professional Growth

Statement of Purpose:

Cluster is the basic unit of Ongoing Applied Professional Growth where teachers use the STEPS for Effective Learning to study and develop instructional strategies for classroom application. These strategies target specific student needs. The cluster also evaluates student work for evidence of accurate application of instructional practices that are field tested and well-researched.

This strategy-driven approach to leading cluster learning requires that the “new learning” is developed for immediate classroom application by all cluster members. That is, effective cluster leaders segment and sequence instructional student strategies so that that the new learning, or strategy, is modeled or demonstrated in its application while contextualizing the theoretical understanding and research behind it so that it is developed with adequate depth within a cluster meeting. This process ensures that teachers are ready to immediately and effectively apply the new learning in their content area by the end of the cluster meeting.

Further, during each cluster meeting, the master and/or mentor teachers plan to support each teacher’s classroom new learning application. They do this between cluster group meetings through a continuum of support including lesson planning, demonstration or modeling, team-teaching, and observation with reflective feedback. As teachers dialogue about their application processes and examine student work, master and mentor teachers evaluate to what extent teachers successfully implement instructional student strategies.

The Role of the Leadership Team with Clusters:

The role of the leadership team and of individual members of the leadership team with regard to cluster is to:

- Identify student strategies that are aligned to each of the cluster cycles on the school plan;
- Validate the effectiveness of the student strategies through field testing;
- Teach appropriate leadership team members how to apply student strategies for cluster development;
- Monitor cluster documentation and implementation for effective
  - outcomes that are aligned to the specific area of need,
  - master and/or mentor follow-up,
  - new learning targeting the identified student need,
  - formative student data used to inform the new learning in subsequent clusters, and
  - cluster protocol use.
- Monitor use of pre-, post-, and formative assessments for quality...
  - alignment to state test,
  - progress of the students toward meeting the cluster cycle goal,
  - progress of the students toward meeting the yearly cluster goal, and
  - progress of the students toward meeting the school goal.
Selecting Student Strategies for Cluster Learning

It is very important for the leadership team to select and field test student strategies to meet the student achievement goals on the school plan. For that reason, this section thoroughly explains how to field test student strategies for cluster.

Alignment to the School Plan:

Master and mentors need to strategically select cluster group topics. The strategies must align to the area of student need and to the school plan. By choosing cluster activities based on these criteria, the master and mentor teachers will ensure that increasing student achievement in a systematic manner remains at the forefront of every activity in which the cluster engages. Clearly, the leadership team must be heavily involved in aligning cluster group topics to strategies. The following scenario demonstrates how this process might happen.

Research-Based Strategies:

Master and mentor teachers are responsible for researching effective student strategies that target the area of identified student need. The collective team should review and select strategies using a variety of research from reputable sources, as well as from their own experiences, providing the team member can provide proof of the strategy’s effectiveness. Before doing this, cluster leaders need to:

- Examine the school’s existing curriculum and/or programs to identify strategies that address the targeted skill.
- Look for outside strategies to supplement the existing curriculum and/or programs if the school’s curriculum and/or programs do not include strategies to address the skill to be mastered.
- Decipher whether teachers are not effectively implementing the school curriculum’s effective strategies or if ineffective strategies need to be replaced.

The gathered literature and research should conclusively indicate the strategy’s impact on student achievement. Furthermore, student strategies should be selected from credible sources. Defining a credible source can sometimes be difficult. Master and mentor teachers need to consider the work of those who are seen as experts in their field, sources that have positive student achievement results replicated in a variety of settings, and those which fully explain the strategy, complete with a thorough explanation of the critical attributes of the strategy.

It is important to note that strategies selected should be student based as opposed to teacher based. A strategy brought to cluster should provide students with a tool or process they can use whenever they are required to perform a specific skill or set of skills. Once students have developed expertise in applying the strategy, they should be able to use it independent of the teacher. It should also be applicable to all content areas. A teacher based strategy is one that only focuses on what teachers may use such as the use of visuals to enhance their instruction. The use of visuals does not provide students with a tool they can use, but focuses only on teacher methodology.
### Cluster Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>student-based strategy:</strong></th>
<th><strong>teacher-based strategy:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Wednesday’s cluster, the cluster leader demonstrates one “chunk” of a context clues strategy, <em>contrast/antonym clues</em>. This strategy helps students find the meaning of unknown words in sentences that have the opposite meaning somewhere near the use of the unknown word. This strategy includes finding signal words that indicate the meaning is opposite. During his model of this new learning, the cluster leader incorporates a cooperative learning (teacher-based) technique called <em>think-pair-share</em> that allows for student-to-student interaction as they work through the guided practice part of the lesson on contrast/antonym context clues. During development time, the cluster leader has members apply this “chunk” of the context clues strategy to their content areas. One career teacher plans to teach context clues in her physical science lesson while another will implement the new learning during a lesson on Renaissance art.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Monday’s cluster, the cluster leader presents ways teachers can use cooperative learning, particularly using the <em>think-pair-share</em> strategy in their classrooms. The cluster leader brings in a video of her 2nd period math class as she teaches students the procedures and expectations for their <em>think-pair-share</em> activity. She even provides teachers with a rubric that describes the criteria for an exemplary, proficient, developing, and novice <em>think-pair-share</em> interchange that they may use to assess students when they implement the strategy. During development time, the cluster leader has members apply the <em>think-pair-share</em> strategy to their content-area. One career teacher plans to use it during a lesson on adding dialogue to paragraphs, while another plans to integrate the strategy as she models how to find the midpoint of a line.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, before a strategy is ready to be taught in cluster, it must be credible with students in the school. No research-based strategy, regardless of how prominent the name behind it is, should be presented in cluster until **after the master and/or mentor have field tested it over a period of time and can produce increased student achievement results.** (Refer to documented increases in student achievement on page 94 under Quality of Content) (This is why most master and mentor teachers choose to have the area of student need that they are field testing strategies for as their IGP.) There are several reasons that this must be done. First, using the strategy with students provides the opportunity for the master and mentor teacher to gather authentic student artifacts to use during the cluster meeting.

Next, it allows them to identify the critical attributes, along with any modifications that may need to be made to the strategy for the students represented by the cluster members, as well as opportunities to effectively introduce elements of the TAP Instructional Rubric. This “real” experience with the strategy also gives the master and mentor teacher the opportunity to focus on how to teach the strategy to adults. Effective methods for teaching adults are many times the same as those used to teach students. An effective cluster leader is able to make the connection for how effective teaching in a classroom transfers to effective teaching in a cluster. For example, just as a teacher’s modeling of his/her own thought process (metacognition) is critical for student learning, it is also critical for teacher learning and should be a part of a leader’s modeling in cluster.
Presenting Strategies with Effective Follow-Up

Sequencing and Segmenting Cluster Learning:

The leader of the cluster must segment the learning into manageable chunks for the cluster members based on their experiences during the field testing. Leadership teams should assist individual members with sequencing and segmenting the new learning as part of developing the cluster long range plans. Proper segmenting of new learning is not only important to develop teacher proficiency in implementing the strategy, but it is also important in order to develop student expertise in applying the strategy. After each cluster, teachers should be prepared to apply new learning in their classrooms. This skill is similar to teaching students in the classroom. Given the time constraints, what is it that the leader wants teachers to be able to do accurately in their classroom before the next cluster meeting? The cluster leader must assist all members in developing competency in the skill during cluster time.

The cluster leader should begin the meeting by making connections to the school goal, the cluster long-range growth plan, and the previous cluster meetings. Cluster work cannot be in isolation. These connections should ALWAYS tie directly to growth in student achievement through quality instruction of a specific strategy supported by the TAP Instructional Rubric. This establishes a clear and strong sense of purpose, connecting classroom instruction and student learning. (Refer to page 88 under Leader as Facilitator).

It is important to note that although segmenting and sequencing is done beforehand, it ultimately comes down to student need.

Scenarios for Leadership Team Meetings Around Clusters

- Identifying Strategies
  - Leadership Team meetings should regularly be used to identify effective strategies that target the identified areas of student need on the school plan. A possible outcome could be, “By the end of the meeting, the Leadership Team will identify two strategies for teaching problem solving with irrelevant information.” The follow-up would be imperative for this being a strong outcome, and may read something like, “Leadership Team members will write their IGP around the area of problem solving with irrelevant information and begin field testing. In three weeks, the members will bring back the student results, student work, how the strategy was segmented and the critical attributes to validate or discredit the strategy.” It may be that all members of the Leadership Team would not have this as an IGP. It may only be appropriate for certain members given the structure of their clusters.

- Validating a Strategy
  - The selection of the strategies is not sufficient for justifying its use in the classroom. Leadership teams should require members to present the student achievement results from the field testing, along with the reasoning for sequencing and segmenting the new learning and the critical attributes. A sample outcome from a leadership meeting around this topic could be, “By the end of the meeting, the leadership team will identify the most effective strategies for addressing the needs in the school plan and begin to develop a plan for taking that new learning to cluster (LRP).” The follow-up could be, “All relevant leadership team members will observe the strategy being taught to identify the critical attributes, and members will identify the teacher area of
need based on the evaluations from members in their cluster and highlight areas within the plan where they could possibly be integrated.”

- **Teaching Leadership Team Members a Strategy (part of a strategy)**
  
  - After the leadership team members have identified the strategies and field tested them with proven results, the team should focus on making certain that all members who will present the strategy in cluster or support teachers in the classroom with the strategy can do so effectively. This means teaching the leadership team members how to teach and support the implementation of the strategy. For this type of meeting, the outcome could possibly be, “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will be able to effectively teach and support the first two chunks of the ‘It Says, I Say’ strategy.” For follow-up, the members could begin teaching the first chunk or implementing the first pieces in their own classrooms, depending on where they are with implementing the school plan for their cluster.

- **Assessing Documentation for a Specific Purpose**
  
  - As leadership team members are presenting the professional learning through cluster, it is imperative that the leadership team as a whole monitor and support the cluster leaders. One way to do this is by assessing the various aspects of the cluster documentation. One possible outcome might be, “By the end of the meeting, members will analyze cluster meeting records for the quality and alignment of follow-up to the outcome.” For the follow-up to the leadership team meeting, one example for this cluster could be, “Based on the identified issues, leadership team members will adjust the follow-up for upcoming clusters in order to increase the quality and bring examples to the next leadership team meeting.”

- **Monitoring Assessments and Results from Cluster**
  
  - Leadership teams must be driven by the student achievement results based on cluster learning. This is done not only at the beginning and end of a cluster cycle, but also by analyzing the formative assessment data throughout the implementation of the LRP in cluster. A possible outcome for this type of work in leadership team could be, “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will identify progress of three clusters using their formative assessments from the prior two cluster meetings and make plans to address results not on target to meet the goals.” The follow-up would typically be around how those plans would be integrated back into the cluster. For example, “Members will implement the modifications and bring back student work showing the effectiveness of the modifications on student achievement.”

**Cluster Process**

- Clusters are strategy-driven and based on specific student data. The master and mentor teachers and/or leadership team members analyze and prepare to present data outside of the cluster so that cluster members easily see and understand the school plan. ▲

- The cluster members give a pre-assessment which will be used later to compare with post-assessment results, so that they can draw relationships to the new instructional strategies they have applied. The pre/post assessments must focus on the specific student skill aligned to standards and state assessments and pinpoint the specific problems students are having with that skill. ▲▲
- Master/mentor teachers teach research-based strategies that have been proven, via field testing, to increase student achievement in the specific area of student need.

- It is not appropriate to use the cluster as a traditional common planning time. However, after teachers see how to teach the strategy, clusters develop how they will implement the new learning into the classroom using instructional materials (e.g. the teacher’s manual, planning book). This process ensures that the lesson is developed fully enough for immediate and accurate application.

- At the beginning of cluster, members focus on student work results from the implementation of the previous cluster’s strategy. Members analyze the student work to identify to what extent the implementation of the strategy worked for their students. This analysis should reveal reasons why students are still having difficulty with the specific skill. Highlighting characteristics of student work at differing proficiency levels is one way of efficiently engaging this process.

- The skillful master/mentor teacher uses paraphrasing, questioning, and summarizing skills to lead career teachers to a deeper understanding of the student data, the strategy application, and subsequent teacher learning. He/she may infuse indicators from the TAP Instructional Rubric.

- Exemplary cluster groups focus on refining how teachers employ a strategy to increase student performance in a specific skill.

- The student work should direct the teachers to modifications of the strategies in order to further target students needing additional instruction or extension. This would include grouping students based on the characteristics of their work revealed during the analysis of formative assessments. The student work should also lead to the identification of next strategies for application.

- After a short period of time when the formative assessments reveal that all or almost all students have made significant progress toward the cluster goal, they then give students the post-test to measure student proficiency in the targeted skill. They examine results of the pre- to post- tests to draw correlations between the instructional strategy application and student gains in the targeted skill.
Cluster Meeting “Sample Protocol”

*Note: Actual times should be adjusted depending on the specific content of the individual meeting needs.*

| (10 minutes) | ▪ The cluster leader references the Long Range Plan and reviews activities of the day. ▲
  ▪ The cluster members identify trends in student work as aligned to criteria set at the last meeting. The master/mentor teacher asks probing and clarifying questions to assist teachers in deeper learning of their teaching practice and its impact on students. ▲
  ▪ The cluster leader then assists teachers in identifying the core student need and discusses how that need relates to the day’s activities. ▲ |

| (20 minutes) | ▪ The cluster leader provides a segment of new learning: ▼
  - Cluster leader provides theoretical understanding of the targeted student skill and provides reference to the research where the strategy being studied/applied originated. Here the leader should also make connections between the new learning and the TAP Instructional Rubric.
  - Cluster leader illustrates the effectiveness of the strategy by referencing student achievement gains as a result of field testing of the strategy. Student work samples showing increased proficiency should be presented.
  - Cluster leader presents teachers with a handout enumerating the critical attributes of the strategy and provides a quick verbal preview of what will take place during the demonstration.
  - Cluster members experience the application of the new learning from a student point of view while the cluster leader demonstrates (or has arranged for a cluster member to demonstrate) the application of the new learning. During this demonstration, the leader frequently stops and explains what she/he is doing and how it relates to the student need, prior teacher/student learning and the TAP Instructional Rubric.
  - Cluster members ask clarifying questions regarding the strategy application.
  - Cluster leader asks probing questions regarding the student experience (cluster members) of the application with a focus on the specific identified skill of the cluster goal and how it relates to the trends in student needs that were identified during the analysis of student work. |

| (25 minutes) | ▪ Cluster members develop the strategy for application in their classroom using actual materials necessary for application with their students: ▼
  - Cluster members ask clarifying questions
  - Cluster leaders probe for deeper understanding
  - Cluster members may practice the application with other members of the group taking the student role.
  - Master or mentor teacher uses coaching skills to assist in deeper understanding and thorough development for accurate application. Additionally, during these interactions, the master/mentor teachers internally note the type of follow-up support needed for each member. |

| (5 minutes) | ▪ Cluster members debrief the process, summarize the learning and make plans for application in their classrooms:
  - Teachers are assigned to bring back specific examples of student work to be assessed with clear criteria aligned to the pre/post assessments and state standards. This student work must be able to be used to frame the next cluster’s learning.
  - Master and mentor teachers make specific appointments and define the focus of the assistance in order to assist all cluster members with their application of the strategy in their classrooms. |

(During the week all cluster members apply the new instructional strategy with mentor/master teacher support, examine student work for evidence of success and making changes to instructional practice.)
Leadership’s Role in Evaluating Cluster Groups:

It is the role of the leadership to continually monitor the quality of the cluster group planning, activities, leadership and the participation of its members. Suggested activities include:

- Leadership Team meeting activity: examine a series of 5 cluster group records and the long range plan using the Cluster Group Records Rubric. The team should also isolate a part of the rubric to apply to the records in order to foster in-depth discussion, rather than a “surface” discussion of the entire rubric.
- Leadership Team members regularly observe from a “participant observer” role, taking notes and collecting data during the meeting. Afterward, the leadership team member debriefs the observation using the STEPS for Effective Learning as the guide (see guiding questions below).
- The principal regularly observes cluster groups (one or two a week) and debriefs the cluster meeting with a reflective conversation with the cluster leader.
- If possible, members of leadership teams from other TAP schools should visit to observe and provide feedback on a quarterly or semester schedule.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive.

Guiding Questions for Cluster Observations:

- Where does this cluster group meeting “fit” in the cluster long range plan?
- What brought you to identify ______________ as the specific identified need?
- What STEP were you on when you were ______________?
- Why did you choose this instructional strategy?
- What did the teachers “develop for application” in their classrooms?
- What change in teaching do you expect as a result of this meeting?
- How will the teachers receive support for accurate application?
- What follow-up will occur following this meeting?
- Where did you research the instructional strategies applied to this identified student need?
- What if ______________?
- How was student work used during this cluster?
- How do you embed descriptors from the TAP Instructional Rubric into the modeling of the strategy, including the critical attributes?
- What do you want teachers to know and be able to do to improve instructional proficiency to increase student achievement in _____ as a result of this strategy?
- How do you know teachers will be able to implement the new learning effectively as a result of this meeting?

**Also use the Guiding Questions for the STEPS for Effective Learning (page 180).**

The Individual Growth Plan – The “connector” between student and teacher goals

Statement of Purpose:

Student performance will increase through developing individual teacher practice. The IGP serves as the “connector” between two elements:
1) specific identified student needs, and
2) specific teacher skill areas for instructional development.

The IGP acts as a tool to connect cluster learning to the classroom level. While the teachers remain focused on achieving measurable student results, they also pay attention to identifying improvement areas in their instructional practice using the research-based instructional practices outlined in the TAP Instructional Rubric. With this dual-focus in mind, each teacher, with the assistance of a master and/or mentor teacher develops an Individual Growth Plan. This tool facilitates and records the active process using the STEPS for Effective Learning to enhance both student and teacher levels of learning and performance.

Ultimately, the IGP should help teachers answer the following questions:

- How am I developing my instructional skills?
- What is the direct impact of my developing instructional practice on student achievement?
- How will I apply the new learning developed in cluster?
- How do I use assessment data to drive instructional improvement?
- How do the needs that I see in student work influence how I connect one piece of my instruction to the next?
- How will I know to what extent my students will show growth on the annual state assessment?
- How do I know how my students are continuously growing in meeting state standards?

**Process for Developing an IGP (also see Section 3: The IGP):**

- After developing a School Plan, master and mentor teachers field test strategies to address several identified areas of student need. The logical choice for master and mentor teacher’s first IGP focus is the student need that they field test. Given this scenario, the leadership team members should work to develop their own IGPs in leadership team meetings. The example IGPs (see Section 3: The Individual Growth Plan, page 101) illustrate ways to teach teachers how to apply the IGP process.
- Teachers, with the support of the master and mentor teachers, use the school plan, cluster goals and any teacher evaluation information from past observations to establish IGP goals focused on an identified student need and an indicator from the TAP Instructional Rubric they need to further develop. They also plan for how they will apply cluster learning and grow in their own area of identified need.
- Periodically, during mentoring sessions with master/mentor teachers and as an independent practice, teachers review their IGP goal, update instructional activities and follow-up support, and record student results and their progress in an area of refinement.

At the end of each cycle and/or IGP (A teacher’s IGP will usually follow the length of a cluster cycle, but this may differ based on the growth and needs of the individual teacher’s students):

- Teacher analyzes results from data and reflects on successes and necessary “next steps”

**Leadership Team’s Role in Monitoring IGPs:**

The leadership team is responsible for working with IGPs on many different levels. They include:
• Using the school plan to assist all leadership team members in developing their own IGP to be used as examples when working with the career teachers.
• Overseeing the development of career teachers’ IGPs.
• Monitoring the goals, activities, and quality and quantity of support from master and mentor teachers, and the resulting changes in student achievement and teacher evaluation scores.

Scenarios for Leadership Team Meetings Developing IGPs

• Writing IGPs in Leadership Team Meetings
  - Developing master and mentor teacher IGPs is in essence modeling how to teach IGPs to the career teachers. As such, the meetings that develop master and mentor teacher IGPs are sequenced and segmented as would any new learning. Possible outcomes and follow-up from meetings could be:

    o “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will be able to write effective IGP goals. Members will use cluster cycle pre-test information and teacher evaluation scores to inform measurable identified student needs and career teacher areas of refinement,” with a possible follow-up as, “Leadership team members will teach cluster members how to use student data and teacher evaluation data to identify and write their IGP goal. Cluster leaders will bring back two strong IGP goals to the next leadership team meeting.”

    o Or “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will identify quality pre/post-assessments aligned to the areas of student need identified in the goals that will reveal specific areas of student problems within the identified need”, with a possible follow-up of, “Leadership team members will teach cluster members how to select and develop assessments for their IGP goal and bring back two strong examples to the next leadership team meeting.”

    o Or “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will identify the characteristics of effective tracking of formative assessment data to show student growth and develop a plan for teaching that to cluster members”, with a possible following as, “Leadership team members will bring examples of how teachers plan to track the formative assessment data on their IGP to the next meeting.”

• Segmenting the monitoring of various parts of an IGP
  - A cursory review of IGPs will not move the process and student achievement forward in a meaningful way. Therefore, a meeting where a team reviews five whole plans will tend to be less effective than analyzing one IGP for how well the activities align to the student area of need, for example.

    o A possible example for a leadership meeting outcome in this area could be, “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will identify activities that are included in IGPs that are not producing the expected movement in student achievement and develop plans for more effective activities.” A possible follow-up would be, “Members will meet with individual career teachers and identify/plan for better aligned activities. Each member will bring one example to the next leadership team meeting.”

• Monitoring progress with student achievement
A primary job of the IGP is to move student achievement forward in a systematic manner. As such, it is imperative that leadership team meetings be devoted to analyzing progress toward meeting the goals and plan for needed support to ensure that the students reach their achievement goals. Given that, a possible outcome for a leadership team meeting could be, “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members will use existing IGPs to identify the academic movement of students that is not on track to meet the IGP goal and plan interventions.” The follow-up then leads directly to how the master and mentor teachers would support career teachers with those interventions and may read, “Members will meet with individual career teachers to plan for the modifications and bring examples of revised IGPs that incorporate those interventions to the next meeting.”

The Case Study – Guiding and Monitoring Individual Coaching Relationships

Statement of Purpose:
A Case Study is to a Leadership Team what student work is to a cluster group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Work</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through examination of student work samples, cluster members learn about their instructional practice and its impact on student learning.</td>
<td>Through examination of artifacts in a Case Study, Leadership Team members learn about the peer coaching practices and their impact on the collaborative learning culture within the school and how they impact student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A case study is an approximately 10-minute presentation of a mentor/master teacher’s work with a career teacher through an IGP using the STEPS for Effective Learning. The teachers use student artifacts to demonstrate the impact of each STEP.

The Case Study moves the IGP from documentation of how a teacher works with a more proficient peer (master/mentor) to develop significant student achievement gains to a reflective performance of that process. It is an exercise semi-formalizing the daily work that mentor and master teachers do with teachers they mentor. Case Studies make this work “visible” so that others can observe the work and provide feedback.

We recommend that Leadership Teams regularly monitor and support the peer-coaching process and the development of IGPs. Through regular Case Study presentations during Leadership Team meetings, members will develop common understandings of how the peer-coaching process improves student achievement.

Process for Developing a Case Study:

- The Leadership Team may schedule case study presentations on a bi-monthly basis.
- Mentor and master teachers collect artifacts from their work with their assigned career teachers.
 Occasionally, a case study might be presented to the entire staff or in small groups during a staff meeting to develop a school culture of collaboration and learning.

**Schedule of Support – Communication when Master Teachers are assigned to support**

Good communication builds trust between career teachers and the Leadership Team members. Usually, it is very difficult for a master teacher to follow-up with every career teacher in every cluster every week. We recommend that the Leadership Team develop a schedule of support so that career teachers know exactly who they can expect to provide consistent coaching. The sample below is only one way of doing this. During the time when a master teacher is not assigned to do regular classroom coaching, the mentor teacher provides the follow-up for those teachers.

**Sample Calendar of Support:**

**Regular scheduled support organized by cluster groups with two master teachers (this is in addition to support needed for cluster learning):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Name</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>1st Quarter</th>
<th>2nd Quarter</th>
<th>3rd Quarter</th>
<th>4th Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Lit - Melisa</td>
<td>Math - Sue</td>
<td>Lit - Melisa</td>
<td>Math - Sue</td>
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**Support schedule organized by cluster groups with ONE master teacher:**

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Inter-rater Reliability – Building the Credibility in the Teacher Evaluation and Performance Appraisal Guide (TEPAG) System

Statement of Purpose:

It is imperative that the leadership team constantly works to evaluate teachers correctly. First, teachers need accurate information about their performance that is directly focused on improving their instructional practice, and ultimately their students’ performance. The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching’s research shows a strong correlation between each teacher’s student achievement value-added gains and evaluations scores. Obviously, in order for evaluation results to be accurate, the TAP Instructional Rubric (Refer to Section 4) must be applied accurately. Simply giving teachers high scores will not result in student achievement gains; evaluations are intended to build on teacher strengths while providing targeted assistance to increase instructional effectiveness. The work of the leadership team in developing inter-rater reliability will impact the following areas:

- credibility of the evaluators and their ability to coach
- integrity of the system
- trust in the process and those people implementing it
- energy to focus on professional growth with a purpose – increasing student achievement.

Clearly, leadership teams have an essential role of maintaining inter-rater reliability.

Processes for Ensuring Inter-Rater Reliability:

To prepare to ensure inter-rater reliability, it is important to:

- Schedule at least monthly inter-rater reliability leadership team activities.
- Create a formalized system comparing different evaluators’ scores with same teacher so discussion can occur when: different content areas, different times of the day, or at the beginning, middle, and end of unit. If you choose to use PAMS, this system will generate such report types. Again, these discussions should occur monthly and/or at the end of each evaluation cycle.
- Conduct teamed evaluations to continually monitor the system. This can be done as a part of developing the formal evaluation schedule, or it can take place less formally.
- Use taped lessons and share scoring sessions in leadership team meetings to help the team sharpen its inter-rater reliability.
- Invite outside certified evaluators to share in observation and scoring sessions. TAP Directors or TAP staff can assist in calibrating scores.

Scenario:

Leadership Teams must focus their work on ensuring inter-rater reliability. While it is impossible to come to consensus on all areas of the TAP Instructional Rubric in one leadership team meeting, they should focus on ensuring inter-rater reliability over the course of the school year. One way to address problem areas is to use data from PAMS or your own observations to identify one area of inconsistency. For example, if PAMS shows that the majority of evaluators score Academic Feedback a “5”, but one leadership team member
scores lower in this area because he does not see teachers engaging students in giving one another high quality academic feedback, this team member may suggest that the team work on coming to consensus as to exactly what this descriptor means. A possible outcome could be, “By the end of the leadership team meeting, members come to consensus as to the meaning of teachers engaging students in giving one another high quality academic feedback.” The follow-up for this meeting involves all of the teachers, and may be something like, “Master and/or mentor teachers will model having students give one another high quality feedback in their next cluster. They will bring student responses from their follow-up observations to the next leadership team meeting for the team to review.” This example shows that the leadership team understands that they have to continually deepen all teachers’ understanding of the entire TAP Instructional Rubric. Focusing on one rubric area during a leadership team meeting also makes it possible for team members to develop a consistent understanding of the concept.

Preventing “Score Inflation” – Ensuring Success in Raising Student Achievement

Statement of Purpose:

The credibility of the Teacher Evaluation Performance Accountability system (TEPEG) depends on the level of trust that the staff holds in the integrity of the system. If teachers see their evaluation scores as consistent and accurate, and recognize that the process fairly assesses their teaching skills, then their attention moves toward the opportunity for growth that the system provides.

As new evaluators in a TAP school, the leadership team spends much attention building a common understanding of what each of the performance levels look like. Over time, and after Leadership Team members have worked with their assigned career teachers, it is important to revisit those common expectations to ensure that scores continue to accurately reflect the schools’ teaching practices but do not “creep up” in an effort to recognize teachers’ hard work, even when results are more subjective than objective. Therefore, the leadership team needs to relentlessly address evaluation score inflation.

The integrity of the TEPAG system is based on the premise that student achievement grows with increased proficiency of teachers’ knowledge, skills and responsibilities. If evaluators are using the TAP Instructional Rubric accurately, they will not see growth within the indicator until there is a significant student impact within the indicator. That is, the indicator on the teaching rubric is not effective until it produces a student result (i.e. a well communicated lesson objective is not considered proficient if the student does not understand what the purpose of the lesson is.) Therefore, until a teacher’s value-added calculations demonstrate significant student growth, it is difficult to justify tremendous growth in that teacher’s evaluation scores in knowledge, skills, and responsibilities.

Processes for Preventing “Score Inflation”:

There are several methods of preventing score inflation. They include:

- The principal can keep a formalized system (database or spreadsheet) collecting evaluation scores so that scores may be sorted and examined by...
  - evaluator,
  - indicator, and/or
  - content area evaluated (PAMS does this)
• Compare evaluation scores to student growth using the value-added calculations. The correlation scores between value-added and evaluation scores should be consistent. For example, if a teacher’s students average a value-added gain of 2.0, then his evaluation scores should average to a 2.0.

• Share observations of lessons and compare ratings

• Invite outside certified TAP evaluators to share evaluation observations and score with evaluators within the school.

Scenario:

It is important that the leadership team constantly checks for score inflation. The previous example on Academic Feedback from the TAP Instructional Rubric, not only shows a need for inter-rater reliability, but also indicates that scores are being inflated due to a lack of understanding. Therefore, the previous scenario also applies in this section.

Maintaining the Quality of Post Conferences – Enhancing a School Culture of Learning

Statement of Purpose:

The teacher evaluation post conference is the tool that connects the Teacher Performance Based Accountability System to the professional growth systems within the school.

The purpose of an evaluation post conference is to provide verbal feedback to the observed teacher that is focused on professional growth for the purpose of raising student achievement. It is important that evaluators use the post-conference protocol and rubric so that the career teachers have a predictable experience. Career teachers’ trust of the process will grow as they experience a quality post-conference every time with every evaluator. With that trust, they are more likely to enter into the process of professional growth open to grow at a meaningful level.

Processes for Maintaining the Quality of Post Conferences:

- A template for planning post-conferences is adopted by a school’s Leadership Team. Each post-conference observation sheet is kept in the teachers’ evaluation files with the other evaluation documentation (see Section 4).
- Leadership Team members regularly observe each other’s post conferences and use the post-conference rubric to provide feedback to the evaluator leading the post-conference (once a month).
- Leadership Team meetings periodically spend time demonstrating/modeling a post-conference that went well (once a month).
- Principal periodically observes post conferences of the Leadership Team members to provide feedback in the process and inform the team of needs for maintaining quality.

For an example of a post-conference, see the Section 4, Part B on page 173.
The concept of “value-added” can be confusing, in part because it is not how educators have typically viewed academic improvement. It is important for the school leadership team to educate all members of the faculty on the research behind it. That research can be found at www.tapschools.org. In addition to helping everyone understand the link between value-added and the correct application of the TAP Instructional Rubric, each year the leadership team compares the school and individual teacher's value-added scores to the evaluation scores in the school. This process can point to evaluation inflation or deflation and to areas of need for further training.

**Processes for Comparing Value-Added Calculations to Teacher Evaluation Scores:**

This is one process in TAP that is fairly straight-forward. It includes analyzing:

1) Whole-school value-added scores—For this comparison, simply average all teachers’ evaluation scores and compare them to the composite school-wide value-added score. Schools should expect to see these scores within a point of one another.

2) Subject area value-added scores—For each subject area that is tested and for which a value-added score is calculated, average the teachers’ evaluation scores who taught each subject. Compare the average evaluation score to the school value-added score for that subject.

3) Individual teacher value-added scores—The school principal should also compare each teacher’s evaluation scores to the value-added score that was calculated for his/her class. These scores should be shared with the teacher as soon as the principal has both. (Do not share any teacher information with anyone other than that teacher.)

**Scenario:**

The leadership team uses PAMS to average the teacher evaluation scores for last year and lines them up with their value-added scores. They note which teachers scores were consistent and make plans to address evaluators scoring too high or too low.

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<td>B</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<td>deflation – check individual evaluators</td>
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**Evaluation Schedule – Ensuring Success for Professional Growth**

**Statement of Purpose:**

It is necessary that the leadership team develops an evaluation schedule. The schedule should:
• spread individuals’ evaluations throughout the year;
• include at least one evaluation from an administrator, one from a master teacher, and one from a mentor;
• include announced and unannounced evaluations; and
• include periodic reviews of progress toward completing all evaluations and post-conferences.

Processes for Developing an Evaluation Schedule:

One suggested process is:

• Using the school calendar, eliminate the dates on which it would not be fair to conduct evaluations. For example, block out the first and last two weeks of school, the day before winter break, the first day back after an extended break, etc.
• Counting the number of days left in the year and divide that number by the number of evaluations that each teacher will have.
• Using the number, divide the calendar into evaluation “windows.” Each window should have approximately the same number of days.
• Place each teacher into each window once.
• Assigning an evaluator for each teacher in each window, making sure that each teacher has at least one evaluation from an administrator, one from a master teacher, and one from a mentor teacher.

With this process, the schedule could be presented to the entire faculty. The evaluations could still be unannounced since the teachers do not know when within the evaluation window they will be evaluated. They will only know who will be evaluating them and approximately when the observation takes place.

Examples of Processes:

While each school will need to develop a schedule for evaluations that is unique to the school configurations, an example is provided on the following pages as a sample for review. Note how the school:

• Divides the school into even evaluation “windows”.
• Shows how teachers are evaluated by a balanced team of mentors, masters and administrators.
• Balances the number of evaluations by evaluator.
• Includes state requirements.
### TAP Observation Schedule

**2005-2006**  
**Revised 2/2/06**

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Training Career Teachers in the Teacher Evaluation and Performance Appraisal Guide (TEPAG) System

Statement of Purpose:

It is important that leadership teams train teachers in the TEPAG system. This training should include an overview in the spring before starting the payout year, making the TEPAG guide available to teachers for review, covering key concepts in the start-up of school workshop, and reviewing the system before payouts are conducted. The TAP representative supporting your school will provide assistance and materials to use for these presentations.

TEPAG–PAMS Key Points

Teacher Evaluation and Performance Award Guide (TEPAG) Document – Policies Section:

Evaluation Team

The teacher performance evaluation process requires that each teacher be evaluated multiple times. The evaluation team consists of the principal (or assistant principal or district personnel), a master teacher, and a mentor teacher. The teacher also serves as a self-evaluator to facilitate reflection on their teaching.
Evaluation Cycle & Frequency

Each teacher will be observed at least 4-6 times during a school year. The following frequency is required:

- No less than 1 time per year by the master teacher.
- No less than 1 time per year by a qualified mentor teacher.
- No less than 1 time per year by the principal, assistant principal, or district personnel.
- The remaining 1-3 evaluators should be determined by the school leadership team.
- Master teachers are evaluated by no less than 1 master and no less than 1 administrator with remaining evaluations determined at school.

Key Points for evaluations

- Required evaluator types are scheduled for each teacher (PAMS will not calculate if all required evaluators are not entered).
- Record of evaluation scores are signed by evaluator and teacher for each post conference and filed.

Key Points for PAMS On-line Reports for Grade and Subject

PAMS On-line Reports provide reports by grade and subject. Please review the questions below to assist the leadership team in scheduling evaluations to provide expected reports.

For Elementary Schools

As evaluations are scheduled, consider a balance of evaluations by subjects. Preferred percentage of subjects is determined by school.

- Is it important to the school’s leadership team for a percentage of evaluations to be represented in each subject?
  Ex. Schools might have 50% of evaluations in English Language Art, 40% in Math, 5% in Science and 5% in Social Studies. Many schools did not give consideration to subjects during scheduling of evaluations.

For Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

As evaluations are entered, consider how grades are determined for related arts teachers.

- Is it important for your PAMS Reports by grade to only reflect the teachers in that grade?

  When entering the grade for related arts/resource teachers, determine if you want the scores to be reflected in the “other” category report or in the grade the students they are teaching (Grades Pre-K - 12th Grade) grade report.

  Example: Many schools have a preference for the Grade Report to reflect the teachers represented in that grade only. The “Other Report” would reflect the scores for related arts/resource teachers.
Responsibilities Surveys

Responsibilities Surveys must be completed before mid-May and average score by teacher entered into PAMS. All evaluations and the Responsibilities Score must be entered before each teacher’s final score is calculated.

Providing Training for Leadership Team Members – Building Capacity for Leadership

Statement of Purpose:

In many instances, leadership team members are being asked to perform duties that they have never performed before or have performed on a limited basis. The leadership team is the primary support system for each of the members on the leadership team. As such, time in leadership team meetings must be devoted to building the capacity of each of the members in the following areas:

- Leadership Skills
- Coaching/Communication Skills
- TAP Processes (Cluster, IGP, Evaluation)
- Content Area Knowledge and Knowledge of Instruction

Many of these areas have already been covered or will be covered in later sections. However, the importance of doing this cannot be overstated. Failure to do so will result in leadership team members’ frustration and feeling overwhelmed due to lack of support and sufficient skill to carry out the duties that they have been assigned in TAP.

The Leadership Team Meeting Log:

The purpose of the leadership team meeting log is to provide direction and documentation for the work of the leadership team. The log tracks the work in each of the categories described on the previous pages. It is important to note, as you will see on the example meeting log, that the meetings are driven by outcomes (what the team members are expected to know and be able to do as a result of the meeting) and follow-up (what the leadership team members will go and do as a result of the meeting). Following the example of a leadership team log, you will find the rubric from program review that is used to evaluate the leadership team meeting log.
## Leadership Team Meeting Log
**School**: Elementary  **Year**: 2004-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Develop/Monitor</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/23/04</td>
<td>The team will revisit school plan and make changes based on areas of student need from state test results.</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>The master and mentor teachers will make changes to the school plan and cluster long range plan and communicate the plan to teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/23/04</td>
<td>The team will check and refine the development of the &quot;Writing Rubric&quot; teaching strategy and make a monitoring checklist for team to use when observing follow-up from cluster meeting.</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>As they are in the classrooms this week, the master and mentor teachers will use the monitoring checklist to script evidence of the “Writing Rubric” strategy and bring the script/checklist to the 8/26 leadership team meeting for review of its implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/23/04</td>
<td>The team will review the monitoring checklist outcomes and how the “Writing Rubric” strategy has been implemented in classrooms. The team will identify 2 effective teaching strategies for teaching main idea to be field tested.</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>Master and mentor teachers will begin field testing the 2 strategies for identifying main idea and bring student work to next meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/30/04</td>
<td>The team will review monitoring checklist for observing classrooms for follow-up from cluster meetings. Master and mentor teachers will present student work from field testing of 2 main idea strategies.</td>
<td>X X</td>
<td>Master and mentor teachers will continue using the monitoring checklist for observing classrooms. Based on student work, M/M will continue field testing strategies and make modifications as necessary to support lower performing students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/30/04</td>
<td>The team will view a 4th grade Language Arts teaching video (Tape #18), score using the Instruction portion of the TAP Rubric, and compare scores and evidence from lesson for inter-rater reliability. Focus will be on Presenting Instructional Content and Questioning.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Leadership team members will work in pairs to observe in classrooms with focus on PIC and questioning. Scripting and evidence for each pair’s scores will be brought to next meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/6/04</td>
<td>No meeting- Labor Day Holiday</td>
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### Leadership Team Meeting Log
**Elementary School 2004-2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>School Plan</th>
<th>Cluster Goals</th>
<th>Inter-rater Reliability and Evaluation Skills</th>
<th>IGP</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13/04</td>
<td>The team will identify teachers strong in PIC and Questioning and those needing support. The team will identify ways descriptors from these two indicators can be modeled in cluster. The team will identify critical attributes of main idea strategies from field testing.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>M/M will model strategies in clusters and explain critical attributes with connections made to PIC and Questioning from rubric. M/M will bring evidence of strategy’s implementation in classrooms from follow-up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20/04</td>
<td>M/M will present impact of strategy’s implementation in classrooms. Student work from implementation will be analyzed and modifications needed identified for high and low performing students.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>M/M will continue modeling strategy in clusters with identified modifications. M/M will bring evidence of impact of modifications on student work to next meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/27/04</td>
<td>M/M will present student work from implementation of modifications. Master teacher will explain and model Roger Farr Think Aloud strategy for visualization which she is currently field testing.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>M/M will continue modeling strategy in clusters and observe in teachers' classrooms with focus on use of questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/04/04</td>
<td>M/M will present specific questions scripted from observations and team will analyze these for their level. Team will develop questions on the creation and evaluation levels for teachers to use when implementing strategy.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>M/M will incorporate developed questions in their modeling in clusters and provide handouts of questions to teachers. M/M will script for use of these questions during follow-up. The team will reread the section on IGPS in Cluster Handbook and bring questions to next meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11/04</td>
<td>The team will review the components of IGPs and work as a team to develop goals for their IGPs for the purpose of developing drafts of their own IGPs.</td>
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<td>The team will bring drafts of their IGPs to the next meeting for team members to review for alignment of activities to goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/18/04</td>
<td>The team will look at drafts of master and mentor teachers’ IGPs. The team will revise any necessary changes on the drafts before presenting with the faculty on Monday. Master teacher will present student responses from field testing of Roger Farr strategy.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Master teachers will conduct model lessons in classrooms and clusters using the Roger Farr strategy, and they will focus on the “Bean Bag” portion of the strategy for visualization. M/M will bring evidence of strategy’s impact on student achievement from implementation in classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25/05</td>
<td>M/M will present student work as evidence of strategy’s impact on student achievement. Master teachers will model next chunk of strategy for team and explain critical attributes.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Master teachers will continue model lessons using the Beanbag strategy, focusing on visualization. M/M will assist teachers in developing IGPs and bring examples to next meeting for team to review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/01/04</td>
<td>Master teachers will present student responses from their model lessons using the Beanbag strategy to teach visualization. M/M teachers will review examples of IGPs with focus on goals and alignment of activities.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Master teachers will continue to support career teachers’ development and/or refinement of IGPs based on comments from leadership team members. Master teachers will continue modeling and coaching teachers through using the Beanbag strategy and visualization strategy and present student and teacher responses on how this strategy is working at next meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8/05</td>
<td>The master teachers will present feedback from teachers and students on how the Beanbag strategy with visualization is impacting student achievement. Master teachers will model and explain the next strategy that will be introduced in clusters, the Beanbag strategy using the blue beanbag for teacher predicting while reading.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The master teachers will begin model lessons using the Beanbag strategy to teach predicting. They will present student responses with team at the next meeting. Team members will view a video lesson and bring scores and evidence to next meeting with focus on Academic Feedback, Teacher Content Knowledge, and Teacher Knowledge of Students for purpose of inter-rater reliability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/15/04</td>
<td>The team will review feedback from clusters and how the Beanbag strategy for predicting is impacting student achievement. The team will present scores and come to a consensus in Academic Feedback, Teacher Content Knowledge, and Teacher Knowledge of Students. The team will revisit evaluation schedule to make sure everyone is “on schedule” with round 2 evaluations.</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>As they are in the classrooms this week, the team will observe for use of the Beanbag strategy being implemented to teach predicting. The team will continue with round 2 evaluations and conferences. M/M will bring scripting of descriptors under the 3 indicators for evidence of their implementation by teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/24/04</td>
<td>The team will present evidence of the 3 indicators from observations. Team will identify ways to incorporate student to student feedback when modeling in clusters and classrooms.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Master and mentor teachers will continue working on the inferencing Beanbag strategy in classrooms and model how teachers can teach students to provide academic feedback to one another. While conducting follow-up in classrooms, M/M will script evidence of students giving each academic feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/29/04</td>
<td>The team will review any questions or concerns with round 2 evaluations with focus on student to student academic feedback. The team will continue to look for the Beanbag strategy (blue, red, yellow, and green) being implemented in classrooms.</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td>The team will continue observing classrooms for follow-up from cluster meetings. The team will continue with evaluations and conferences. The team will bring evidence of strategy’s implementation in classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6/04</td>
<td>The team will present feedback on cluster strategies that have been observed in classrooms. The team will decide on a date to give post-test to students and analyze the results.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Post-test will be administered and M/M will bring results to meeting for analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/13/04</td>
<td>The team will analyze post-test results to check for growth and improvement. The team will finalize evaluation schedule to finish any observations not completed before Christmas. The team will plan a celebration for improvement from pre-test to post-test.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>The team will work out details for celebration for post-test results for students and teachers. Master teachers will compile post-test results to calculate overall school growth.</td>
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<td>12/23/04</td>
<td>Christmas Holidays. No meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/10/05</td>
<td>Team will analyze pre-test results for next cluster cycle in writing. Master teachers will model and explain the Balanced Literacy Model (Connie Prevatte) Editing and Revising Mini-Lesson strategy for next cluster cycle and provide impact on student achievement from field testing. The team will review components of Program Review, specifically Case Studies. The team created an evaluation schedule to begin round 3 evaluations.</td>
<td>X X X</td>
<td>Master teachers will begin teaching the Balanced Literacy Model (Connie Prevatte) Editing and Revising Mini-Lesson strategy in clusters. The team will begin round 3 evaluations. Team will view video of Case Study for purpose of preparing for Program Review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/17/05</td>
<td>Holiday-No meeting.</td>
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In most instances, the outcome and follow-up are directly connected and provide direction for the next meeting. The log provides evidence that the Leadership Team is continually engaged in the four primary areas of responsibility.

### Leadership Team Meeting Log Rubric

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<tr>
<th><strong>Date</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Follow-Up</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/24/05</td>
<td>The Team will identify key words on Case Study Rubric and apply to Case Study viewed to come to a consensus on scores and compare to National Raters’.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Master teachers will continue to model lessons on new strategy, the Balanced Literacy (Connie Prevatte) Revision and Editing Mini Lesson strategy. They will present student responses at next meeting. Team will review another case study in order to plan for their own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/31/05</td>
<td>Members of the team will score a Case Study and then compare with National Raters’ scores to continue to work on inter-rater reliability.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Master and Mentor teachers will bring a rough draft of case study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leadership Team Meeting Log Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team</strong></td>
<td>Team <strong>routinely</strong> reviews IGPs and cluster meeting records &amp; provides feedback to clusters &amp; to mentor and master teachers responsible for IGP and cluster development.</td>
<td>Team <strong>usually</strong> reviews IGP and Cluster Meeting Records and provides feedback to clusters and to mentor and master teachers responsible for IGP &amp; cluster development.</td>
<td>Team <strong>infrequently or never</strong> reviews IGP and Cluster Meeting Records nor provides useful feedback to cluster members or mentor and master teachers responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team</strong></td>
<td>Team conducts systematic <strong>self</strong>- monitoring for inter-rater reliability and inflation of evaluation scores.</td>
<td>With the <strong>aid of the TAP director</strong>, team conducts systematic monitoring for inter-rater reliability and inflation of evaluation scores.</td>
<td>Team conducts <strong>little</strong> monitoring for inter-rater reliability and inflation of evaluation scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Follow-up and decisions are clearly defined &amp; evident</strong> in the development of the activities.</td>
<td><strong>Follow-up and decisions are clearly defined.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Follow-up and decisions are unclear.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>All of the following components of TAP are functioning at the level of proficient or above as indicated by their own appropriate performance measure:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Most of the following components of TAP are functioning at the level of proficient or above as indicated by their own appropriate performance measure:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Few of the following components of TAP are functioning at the level of proficient or above as indicated by their own appropriate performance measure:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cluster groups</td>
<td>Cluster groups</td>
<td>Cluster groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of the STEPS</td>
<td>Implementation of the STEPS</td>
<td>Implementation of the STEPS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual growth plans</td>
<td>Individual growth plans</td>
<td>Individual growth plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The school plan</td>
<td>The school plan</td>
<td>The school plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cluster Groups

Part A: Cluster Documentation

“We did not find a single case in the literature where student learning increased but had not been a central goal.”
-- Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun --

Introduction:

Once the leadership team creates the school plan (the school, yearly cluster and cluster cycle goals), the cluster leaders identify researched-based strategies to meet the identified student needs. The two pieces of documentation described in this section – the Cluster Long Range Plan and the Cluster Meeting Record – are tools used to plan and evaluate how cluster groups implement these strategies. As you utilize these tools, keep in mind that the primary factor in evaluating cluster effectiveness is the continual use of formative and summative assessments.

The Cluster Long Range Plan and the Cluster Meeting Record provide cluster groups direction and assess the quality of TAP processes. The documentation in a TAP school is used as a tool to drive and monitor the process of improving student achievement by improving teaching performance. When creating or monitoring TAP documentation, focus on the understanding of the key elements that drive the process rather than simply the words on the page. It is through this understanding that your clusters will have a positive impact on student achievement. Your leadership team will use these documents to monitor the implementation of the school plan.

In this section, we will define each part of the Cluster Long-Range Plan and the Cluster Meeting Record and explain how the cluster leader uses each to run an effective cluster. At the end of this section on documentation, we include actual sample documents with comments to illustrate how the components fit together to successfully increase student achievement. Each component will be illustrated in the example at the end of the section.

Again, throughout this section you will see the geometric figures which correlate to the STEPS of Effective Learning diagram below. This framework should guide you in further understanding your role as a master or mentor teacher in improving instruction and student achievement. Additionally, on the next page you will see the Cluster Meeting Record Rubric which you can refer to as you go through the section to help guide your understanding.
Cluster Meeting Record Rubric
(for use when reviewing and scoring Cluster Meeting Records)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Cluster Cycle goal:&lt;br&gt;- Has clearly defined results in terms of student learning gains&lt;br&gt;- Is directly aligned to the school plan</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Cluster Cycle goal:&lt;br&gt;- Has defined results in terms of student learning gains&lt;br&gt;- Is aligned to the school plan</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Cluster Cycle goal:&lt;br&gt;- does not have defined results in terms of student learning gains&lt;br&gt;- is not aligned to the school plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Cluster outcome includes:&lt;br&gt;- A clear link between what is being learned in cluster and the implementation in the classroom to address identified student learning need&lt;br&gt;- Reference to the immediate and appropriate classroom application of cluster learning</td>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Cluster outcome includes:&lt;br&gt;- A link between what is being learned in Cluster and the implementation in the classroom to address identified student learning need&lt;br&gt;- Reference to appropriate classroom application of cluster learning</td>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Cluster outcome does not include:&lt;br&gt;- A link between what is being learned in cluster and the implementation in the classroom to address identified student learning need&lt;br&gt;- Reference to appropriate classroom application of cluster learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Follow-Up</strong>&lt;br&gt;For career teachers, includes:&lt;br&gt;- Immediate and specific implementation of cluster learning&lt;br&gt;- The collection and analysis of student data to monitor the intervention&lt;br&gt;For Master/Mentors, includes:&lt;br&gt;- Scheduled appointments before the next cluster meeting to provide teachers with further assistance in the form of classroom-based demonstration/team teaching/coaching</td>
<td><strong>Follow-Up</strong>&lt;br&gt;For career teachers, includes:&lt;br&gt;- Implementation of cluster learning&lt;br&gt;- The collection and analysis of student data to monitor the intervention&lt;br&gt;For Master/Mentors, includes:&lt;br&gt;- Scheduled appointments to provide teachers with further assistance in the form of classroom-based demonstration/team teaching/coaching</td>
<td><strong>Follow-Up</strong>&lt;br&gt;For career teachers, does not include:&lt;br&gt;- Implementation of cluster learning&lt;br&gt;- The collection and analysis of student data to monitor the intervention&lt;br&gt;For Master/Mentors, does not include:&lt;br&gt;- Scheduled appointments to provide teachers with further assistance in the form of classroom-based demonstration/team teaching/coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Range Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;The cluster long-range plan includes reference to and quality implementation of all five of the STEPS for Effective Learning as evidenced by:&lt;br&gt;- High-quality pre/post assessments to monitor student work&lt;br&gt;- Appropriately sequenced/segmented high-quality new learning (proven application showing student growth)&lt;br&gt;- Master/Mentor teacher assistance in the form of demonstration/team teaching to ensure all members effectively transfer new learning for their students in the classroom&lt;br&gt;- Continual monitoring of student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective</td>
<td><strong>Long-Range Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;The cluster long-range plan includes the quality implementation of all five STEPS for Effective Learning as evidenced by:&lt;br&gt;- Quality pre/post assessments to monitor student work&lt;br&gt;- Appropriately sequenced/segmented quality new learning (proven application showing student growth)&lt;br&gt;- Master/Mentor teacher assistance in the form of demonstration/team teaching to ensure effective transfer regarding the classroom/cluster connection&lt;br&gt;- Monitoring of student work to determine whether intervention is effective</td>
<td><strong>Long-Range Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;- The cluster long-range plan does not include reference to all five of the STEPS for Effective Learning and may contain any of these problems:&lt;br&gt;- May be assumed, unclear or indirect measure of how cluster learning is impacting student performance and learning&lt;br&gt;- May remain at the theoretical level of information for teachers without consistent and direct classroom application&lt;br&gt;- May emphasize a “list of activities” for teachers to do without examining student work to help monitor interventions applied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The School Plan

Before going on to cluster documentation, it is important to take a moment to review the components of the school goal and how that information is used to direct cluster work.

As was discussed in Section 1: The Leadership Team, the **school goal** is the basis from which the school’s professional development plan is made. Its critical elements are that the:

- School goal is based on the high stakes test (state or district test).
- School goal is based on the area of students’ greatest academic need (language arts, math, etc.).
- School goal is measurable in terms of student achievement.
- School goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students.

**School Goal**: Based on 2004 – 2005 state English Language Arts test results:

- Grade 4 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 17% proficient to 20% proficient, 35% Basic to 45% Basic, and 45% Below Basic will decrease to 35%.
- Grade 5 students will increase from 1% advanced to 3% advanced, 5% proficient to 8% proficient, 38% basic to 48% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 46% Below Basic.
- Grade 6 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 13% proficient to 16% proficient, 38% basic to 46% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 48% Below Basic.

Percentages referenced are required for the school to meet AYP. All students will increase their scores by at least 100 scale score points which represents a year’s growth.

**Review of critical elements:**

- School goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test). - **Goal is based on high stakes test (the state assessment) for English Language Arts**
- School goal is based on area of students' greatest academic need (language arts, math, etc.). - **the goal is focused specific on raising students’ performance in English Language Arts**
- School goal is measurable in terms of student achievement. – **goal will be measured by state high stakes test and includes expected performance levels**
- School goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students. – **the goal is specific about the amount of growth needed to meet AYP for students at each proficiency and grade level and includes a growth goal for all.**

While an important starting point, the school goal in isolation is still too broad to create a focused professional development plan that addresses a specific student need. Therefore, the leadership team narrows the focus to create the **yearly cluster goal**. Its critical elements are that the:

- Yearly cluster goal is aligned and supports school goal.
- Yearly cluster goal is measurable in terms of student achievement.
Yearly cluster goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students.

Yearly cluster goal is based on improving student achievement in specific areas of need that will support them in improving in area referenced in school goal. (Example: School goal is in the area of English/Language Arts. Yearly cluster goal is in the area of reading comprehension.)

Yearly cluster goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test) but is measured by benchmark tests throughout the year.

Example of a Yearly Cluster Goal:

By May 2005, all students will improve performance on the benchmark English Language Arts test aligned to the high stakes test by at least 10%, which is one proficiency level, and students performing at the highest level will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching main idea, supporting details and the writing process. All students will demonstrate at least year’s growth as measured by the benchmark.

Review of critical elements:

- Yearly cluster goal is aligned and supports school goal – the school goal is focused on increased English Language Arts scores and the yearly cluster goal focuses on increasing student proficiency in main idea, supporting details and the writing process
- Yearly cluster goal is measurable in terms of student achievement. - expected student growth is explicitly stated
- Yearly cluster goal includes increasing and/or maintaining proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students. - all students are expected to grow or maintain in proficiency and are expected to make a year’s worth of growth.
- Yearly cluster goal is based on improving student achievement in specific areas of need that will support them in improving in area referenced in school goal. - the focus is main idea, supporting details and writing
- Yearly cluster goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test) but is measured by benchmark tests throughout the year. - the goal is measured by a benchmark aligned to the high stakes test

In the following section, we will review how the yearly cluster goal is narrowed into a cluster cycle goal and then how the information from that goal can be used to create a week by week plan for the cluster through the cluster Long-Range Plan.

The Cluster Long-Range Plan

The school and yearly cluster goal provide the direction and the STEPS for Effective Learning provide the framework for developing the cluster Long-Range Plan. The next step then is to move from the larger school goal and yearly cluster goal to specific and manageable shorter cluster cycle goals. These cluster cycle goals then become the basis for the cluster’s weekly activities, which are mapped out in the cluster Long Range Plan.
Before we review the driving force of this plan, the cluster cycle goal, take a look at the critical elements of a cluster Long-Range Plan. Later in this section, we will describe each of these critical elements.

The cluster Long Range Plan:
- Includes yearly and cluster cycle goals (aligned to the school goal and written in terms of student achievement)
- References strategies cluster members will learn during clusters and implement in classroom following each cluster
- References how cluster members will analyze formative assessments following implementation of new cluster learning for each cluster
- References how master and mentor will support cluster members in the classroom following each cluster
- Includes pre- and post-data for students’ performance prior to the cluster cycle and at the end of the cluster cycle

From the Cluster Record Rubric:
The cluster long-range plan includes reference to and quality implementation of all five of the STEPS for Effective Learning as evidenced by:

- **High-quality pre/post assessments to monitor student work**/ (critical element: includes pre- and post-data for students’ performance prior to cluster cycle and at the end of the cluster cycle)
- Appropriately sequenced/segmented high-quality new learning (proven application showing student growth)/ (critical element: references strategies cluster members will learn during clusters and implement in classroom following each cluster of the cycle)
- Master/Mentor teacher assistance in the form of demonstration/team teaching to ensure all members effectively transfer new learning for their students in the classroom/ (critical element: references how master and mentor will support cluster members in the classroom following each cluster)
- **Continual** monitoring of student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective/ (critical element: references how cluster members will analyze student work using formative assessments following implementation of new cluster learning for each cluster of the cycle)

### The Cluster Cycle Goal

After your leadership team has identified the overarching student needs in the school and yearly cluster goals, you go one step further in narrowing the student need to create **cluster cycle goals**. As was discussed in **Section 1: The Leadership Team**, the critical elements of a **cluster cycle goal** include:

- Cluster cycle goal is aligned to and supports the school goal and yearly cluster goal.
- Cluster cycle goal is measurable in terms of student achievement.
- Cluster cycle goal includes increasing and/or maintaining the highest proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students.
• Cluster cycle goal is based on improving student achievement in specific skill areas of student need that will support students in improving in overarching skill areas referenced in the school goal and yearly cluster goal. (Example: School goal is in the area of English, Language Arts. Yearly cluster goal is in the area of reading comprehension. Cluster cycle goal is in area of making inferences and drawing conclusions.)
• Cluster cycle goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test) and is measured by a pre-to-post- assessment aligned to the high stakes test.
• Cluster cycle goal references the TAP Instructional Rubric indicator on which cluster needs to focus during the cycle.

From the Cluster Record Rubric:

The cluster goal:

• Has clearly defined results in terms of student learning gains/ (critical elements: cluster cycle goal is measurable in terms of student achievement, includes increasing and/or maintaining the highest proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students and is based on high stakes test (state or district test) and is measured by a pre-to-post- assessment aligned to the high stakes test)
• Is directly aligned to the school plan/ (critical elements: cluster cycle goal is based on improving student achievement in specific skill areas of student need that will support students in improving in overarching skill areas referenced in the school goal and yearly cluster goal)

Example of a Cluster Cycle Goal:

By the end of the cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency point in the area of voice and students already scoring a 3 in the area of voice will maintain their scores on a teacher-made writing assessment scored by the State Writing Rubric due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching elaboration, hook and transitional word strategies. Cluster members will focus on Academic Feedback from the Instructional Rubric.

Review of Critical Elements:

• Cluster cycle goal is aligned to and supports the school goal and yearly cluster goal.- the school goal is focused on English language arts, the yearly cluster goal on main idea, supporting details, and writing and the cycle goal is focused on voice in writing
• Cluster cycle goal is measurable in terms of student achievement.- the cycle goal is measurable by a writing rubric aligned to the high stakes test and indicates expected growth for all students
• Cluster cycle goal includes increasing and/or maintaining the highest proficiency levels of all students and at least a year’s growth for all students. – the goal includes an increase of at least one proficiency point for all students with students already performing at the highest level maintaining that level
• Cluster cycle goal is based on improving student achievement in specific skill areas of student need that will support students in improving in overarching skill areas referenced in the school goal and yearly cluster goal.- the focus of this cycle goal is the more narrowed area of voice in writing which directly aligns to the school goal.
Cluster cycle goal is based on high stakes test (state or district test) and is measured by a pre-to-post assessment aligned to the high stakes test. – the pre/post test is a writing rubric aligned to the high stakes test

Cluster cycle goal references the TAP Instructional Rubric indicator on which the cluster focuses during the cycle. – the cluster is focusing on Academic Feedback from TAP Instructional rubric

Although the next section will provide a more detailed explanation of how to create, implement and utilize a high quality pre-to-post assessment, it is important to mention how the pre-to-post assessment shapes an effective cluster cycle goal. Rather than simply providing information about the number of correct or incorrect answers a student has, the pre-to-post assessment also needs to give nuanced information about student performance. For example, reporting results of a writing assessment on voice should not simply look like a single score for each student, but should reference specific areas of voice in which the student is proficient or not proficient. This more specific information assists cluster leaders to identify and field test strategies that are best aligned to the variety of student needs within voice, and therefore most effective in raising student achievement at your school. The assessments also need to be aligned to the high stakes test used to measure the school and yearly cluster goal so you can use these to predict how students progress towards the goals.

Cluster cycle goals must indicate the specific area of student skill within the identified student need defined by the school plan to drive cluster learning and activities. For example, instead of “improving reading comprehension,” which could lead cluster members in a variety of directions to address their students’ needs, a proficient cluster cycle goal identifies the priority components of reading comprehension in which students need improvement. This information will better guide the work of the cluster leader towards selecting specific and appropriate instructional strategies. Examples within reading comprehension may include: “identifying the main idea and supporting details” or “making inferences.” This information better guides the cluster leader to select and apply instructional strategies. This clarity can also help cluster leaders develop formative assessments to measure ongoing cluster work.

It is also important to specify how the cluster cycle goal will be measured in terms of student achievement and what assessment tool will be used to do so (see Section 1: The Leadership Team, for more information regarding assessments). When cluster leaders clearly indicate expected student growth on a specific pre/post assessment resulting from cluster work, then they will be equipped to measure improved student performance in a specific sub-skill at the end of each cluster cycle.

Finally, cluster cycle goals include a specific area from the TAP Instructional Rubric on which the cluster will focus. This indicator should be selected based on trends in teacher evaluation data from the teachers in the cluster group. New schools that do not yet have formal evaluation data should select the TAP Instructional Rubric focus for their early cycles based on trends in beginning of the year informal observations.

### Pre-Test Data

Benchmark and teacher-made pre-assessments provide the data needed to identify specific student needs and quantify the degree of student proficiency before the cluster cycle work begins. As will be discussed later in the section, cluster members give an aligned post assessment at the end of the cluster cycle to quantify the degree of student growth in proficiency as a result of the cluster cycle work. The pre-to-post assessments do not need to be identical, but they do need to assess the same skill using the same evaluation tool. Pre-to-post assessments also have the same content and format.
It is important to report pre-to-post test data in terms of individual students. This pre/post system serves as a comparison tool that measures the difference between each student’s achievement level before the implementation of cluster learning and as a result of it. When the pre-to-post assessment is aligned to the high stakes test, results will also serve as a predictor for how students are progressing towards meeting the school and yearly cycle goal. If the benchmark assessments do not provide a close enough view of student work to allow individual and specific needs to be identified, or the benchmark data is not available in a timely enough manner, use teacher-made assessments to provide the information necessary for creating a quality cluster cycle goal and Long-Range Plan.

Cluster members’ learning can be more meaningfully applied when teachers identify the specific reasons why students are having difficulty with a skill before they apply instructional strategies. For this reason, the pre-assessment information needs to give specific information about what students know and are able to do and not do in that identified skill. This also means that the criteria being used to assess the student work should be clear, specific and aligned to the end of year, high stakes assessment for which teachers and students will ultimately be held accountable. For example, if the area of student need is students’ ability to answer multi-step problems, the pre-assessment should help the teachers see exactly where in the multi-step problem process the students have difficulty. If the student produced an incorrect response was it because he/she was unable to select the correct operation? Was it computational errors? Was it writing a justification to the solution? It is vital to know the reasons why a student misses a multi-step problem. This specific information ensures that the selected strategies and the critical attributes needed to execute them are the ones most aligned with students’ needs and therefore the most effective in raising achievement. During cluster, this information assists teachers to develop the new learning so it best addresses their students’ needs.

Note: In addition to the pre-post system that acts to give a baseline for and end result of the intervention, formative assessments must be applied to track ongoing student growth. These assessments may be informal (e.g. homework, oral responses, journals) or formal (e.g. unit tests, writing prompts, projects). Formative assessments are also analyzed to give the teacher quantitative data on student achievement to both track the effectiveness of the intervention and refine and reform further interventions. Furthermore, formative assessments need to be aligned to the pre-to-post assessment so they are a predictor for how students are progressing toward meeting the cluster cycle goal. Refer to Section 1: The Leadership Team on page 6

In addition, an effective pre-to-post test uses proficiency levels (e.g. advanced, proficient, basic, below basic) that are aligned to the degree of student expertise in the identified skill and to the high stakes test to which students will ultimately be held accountable. Cluster groups then examine individual students’ growth in proficiency later when they report post-assessment results.

When planning a cluster cycle, it is important that the pre-test is closely aligned with the state test. If the assessment is not aligned with the state test expectations, the students may not ultimately demonstrate growth on the school-wide level measured by the state test since the assessments were not accurate predictors. Teachers in a TAP school should have clear knowledge for how their students will perform on the end of the year state test. This should be possible because of the ongoing analysis of student work that is aligned to the state test.
For a sample of pre-test data as it would be seen in a Long-Range Plan, see below:

Pre-test data - Teacher-made assessment aligned with state writing rubric
- 3 out of 105 5th graders scored a 0 on the Voice domain
- 61 out of 105 5th graders scored 1.0 or 1.5 on the Voice domain
- 24 out of 105 5th graders scored 2.0 or 2.5 on the Voice domain
- 17 out of 105 5th graders scored 3 on the Voice domain

Note pre-test scores are provided as number of students scoring at each performance level and not as opposed percentages. The purpose is to ultimately be able to track individual student performance.

Weekly Plans

Once the cluster cycle goal is developed, and the pre-assessment given and developed, the cluster leader, with the assistance of the leadership team, identifies appropriate research-based instructional strategies to field test. Cluster leaders are expected to field test the student strategies that are disseminated in cluster for a variety of reasons. The first purpose is to ensure that the strategy is effective raising your specific students’ achievement in the targeted area of need. The field test also gives the cluster leader the opportunity to gather anecdotal and concrete evidence about the effect of the strategy and the appropriate segmenting/sequencing of the strategy to ensure student growth. Finally, the field test is also the time when the cluster leader identifies the critical attributes of the strategy that enable it to be effective. The cluster leader then can present this information in cluster and:
- Provide documented success that the verify the effectiveness of the student strategy increases student achievement (Quality of Content)
- Identify the critical attributes during the model and development of the student strategy (Expertise of Leader)
- Present relevant examples of student work (Expertise of Leader)
- Create a sense of purpose for the new learning (one way to do this is by referencing specific student’s needs identified from field testing) (Leader as Facilitator).

(See Section 2, Part B: Implementing Effective Clusters on page 79)

From the field testing, the leadership team then develops a week by week plan (the Long-Range Plan) for cluster learning. Since the ultimate purpose of cluster is to develop student expertise, each cluster’s new learning must be manageable for both teachers and students. This means that the new learning must be segmented and sequenced appropriately. To do so, cluster leaders need to know how to integrate the skill progression with students’ proficiency and teachers’ level of expertise. The information gathered from the field test and through interactions with teachers through formal and informal observations informs how to sequence and segment. (For more information regarding the selecting and segmented/sequencing appropriate cluster strategies, see Section 1: The Leadership Team.)

The cluster Long-Range Plan is the TAP tool for developing weekly plans and activities before the cluster begins a cycle. During and after the cycle the Long Range Plan functions as a tool for evaluating the cluster’s success when student results are available. In essence, the Long-Range Plan provides a map for the cluster to follow during each cluster cycle; therefore, it is important to develop a Long-Range Plan for each cluster cycle.

The ultimate purpose of the Long Range Plan is to create a continuum for cluster learning where each meeting connects to the one before it and the one after it. This continuum is achieved through cluster members’ analysis of formative assessments every cluster meeting.
These formative assessments need to be aligned to the specific skill on which the cluster cycle is focused, the state assessment, and the cluster’s pre/post assessments. Like the pre-test, these formative assessments must be analyzed so the cluster leaders and members can identify the specific problems students are having within the larger skill. The additional implication of this type of student assessment is that the Long Range Plan is a living document. It must be flexible; as students’ needs change, it can also change. As a teacher would change her/his unit plan if students were not progressing as they should, so too would the leadership team change the Long Range Plan if students were not progressing as planned.

The guidelines for developing a quality Long-Range Plan for cluster learning include the following:

- Definition of student proficiency levels which establish a common understanding of expected performance
- New learning of instructional strategies which are segmented and sequenced for immediate application in the classroom
- Application of the continuum of master/mentor support for skillful development of new learning
- Continual monitoring of student work to determine the effectiveness of the strategy application
- Assessment of student performance levels using a pre-to post-test aligned to the state test in content and format

Every cluster member transfers new learning from the cluster into classroom practice with master and/or mentor teacher assistance. Therefore, cluster leaders use the Long Range Plan to record what each teacher will apply in their classroom. In addition to making assignments for implementation, follow-up on a Long Range Plan also includes support provided by the master and/or mentor teachers following each cluster meeting. This ensures a strong cluster-classroom connection so that cluster learning significantly impacts student achievement.

**Note:** Cluster goals should be written in terms of increasing proficiency levels of all students rather than in the form of average, which do not provide the information teachers need to identify individual student growth or specific needs for further intervention.
Cluster leaders carefully consider the continuum of learning a new skill when planning and developing clusters. Only when teachers experience the support of the master/mentor teachers following the introduction of each strategy will the new learning translate into skillful and consistent instructional practice. This continuum demonstrates how career teacher development in becoming independent using a new instructional practice is supported by the mentor/master teachers. Therefore, each cluster meeting in the Long-Range Plan references the support teachers will receive from their master/mentor teachers.

For sample of a Cluster Meeting Record, see page 77.

Post-Test Results

Post-test results provide timely data that demonstrates the cluster’s impact on student achievement. This summative data also reveals what skills need further development or which students need further support. Cluster leaders base their decision to give the post-test on the formative assessment data that the cluster has been analyzing during the cycle. Therefore, if the formative assessments do not show growth, the cluster leader may need to extend or shorten the cluster cycle as a result of modifying the segmenting and sequencing of strategies. The post test should not be imposed simply because it was designated to occur on a specific date.

As stated before, averages provide one piece of information about the student group; however, at the end of a cluster cycle, it is important to identify the instructional information needed to plan for the students not yet successful with the skill being taught.

Once these needs are identified, the cluster leader must decide if it is more appropriate to continue working in cluster in this skill area using new or modified strategies. They can also determine whether they want to include the work of individual teachers as part of their IGP development. Leadership team members should analyze post test results and reflect on their success and necessary next steps. This could mean adjusting the school plan if the student needs identified at the beginning of the year were no longer the greatest area of need. For example, a school’s original goal was to focus on writing and annual cluster goal was to first work on content and ideas, then word choice and then voice as these were determined to be the areas of greatest student need. After the first cycle on content and ideas, students were given a writing prompt and it was found that voice had improved since students were writing in a much more engaging and lively manner. In further analyzing the student writing, teachers realized that the greatest need was now in sentence fluency to help students vary
their sentences and increase the flow within their writing. The leadership team then met and reviewed the data and adjusted the school plan so it was better aligned with students’ needs.

**Evaluating a Cluster Long-Range Plan**

Cluster leaders continually self-reflect and evaluate each other’s cluster Long-Range Plans to maintain quality implementation and efficiently use cluster time to increase student achievement. *(Refer to Section 1: The Leadership Team)*

As was referenced at the beginning of this section, below are the critical elements of a cluster Long-Range Plan:

- Includes cluster cycle goal aligned to school goal written in terms of student achievement
- References strategies cluster members will learn during clusters and implement in classroom following each cluster of the cycle
- References how cluster members will analyze student work using formative assessments following implementation of new cluster learning for each cluster of the cycle
- References how master and mentor will support cluster members in the classroom following each cluster
- Includes pre and post-data for students’ performance prior to cluster cycle and at the end of the cluster cycle

The STEPS for Effective Learning are used to plan for quality cluster learning and as a tool for evaluating the implementation of cluster plans documented on the cluster Long-Range Plan form. The Cluster Meeting Record Rubric (see box below) also provides the following outline of characteristics needed for a quality long-range plan.

**For a sample Cluster Long-Range Plan see the example on page 73.**

**From the Cluster Record Rubric:**

The cluster long-range plan includes reference to and quality implementation of all five of the STEPS for Effective Learning as evidenced by:

- **High-quality pre/post assessments to monitor student work/** *(critical element: includes pre and post-data for students’ performance prior to cluster cycle and at the end of the cluster cycle)*
- Appropriately sequenced/segmented high-quality new learning (proven application showing student growth)/ *(critical element: references strategies cluster members will learn during clusters and implement in classroom following each cluster of the cycle)*
- Master/Mentor teacher assistance in the form of demonstration/team teaching to ensure all members effectively transfer new learning for their students in the classroom/ *(critical element: references how master and mentor will support cluster members in the classroom following each cluster)*
- **Continual** monitoring of student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective/ *(critical element: references how cluster members will analyze student work using formative assessments following implementation of new cluster learning for each cluster of the cycle)*
The Cluster Meeting Record

If you think of the cluster Long-Range Plan as a “unit plan” for cluster learning, the cluster meeting record is the “lesson plan.” Indeed, a cluster meeting should run like an effective lesson. The only way for cluster leaders to ensure that cluster time is used effectively is to translate the cluster Long-Range Plan into action with each individual cluster meeting. This requires that the cluster leader plans cluster activities knowing what exactly teachers will apply to the classroom after every cluster meeting.

A Cluster Meeting Record is more than a list of topics to “cover” during a cluster. As an exemplary lesson plan would define the learning objectives, sequenced activities, and assessment methods, Cluster Meeting Records inform cluster members before the actual meeting of:

• The learning outcomes
• Actions they will take to develop proficiency in the new learning
• Materials they will need
• The type of follow-up that will occur

In order to provide more support for cluster leaders beginning to learn to write effective cluster meeting records, this section provides suggested phrases and questions to use as a framework. As the cluster leader becomes more adept at preparing cluster records, they may choose not to use these phrases and questions.

The most important part of the Cluster Meeting Record is that it provides direction to the cluster leader, cluster members, and the leadership team. Not to mention, it gives observers a context from which to assess the cluster’s work. On that note, you can format the document to fit your school’s needs, but it must include the cluster goal, an outcome, and follow-up as detailed in the following critical elements of a Cluster Meeting Record:

• References cluster cycle goal and includes cluster meeting outcome aligned to cluster cycle goal
• References what cluster leader will do to support cluster members’ new learning (strategy or chunk of strategy to be modeled)
• References what cluster members will do to apply new learning
• References materials cluster members are expected to bring to cluster (suggested)
• References specific assignment cluster members are to complete prior to next cluster and specific student data and the specific student work cluster members are to bring to the next cluster
• References specific follow-up support by Master and Mentor in cluster members’ classrooms following cluster

While activities and materials and essential meeting details are not required, they do provide excellent information to members about what they need to bring to cluster and what they will be learning. They also assist leadership team members when they are assessing the cluster documentation to determine the efficacy of the cluster meetings.
School, Yearly Cluster, and Cluster Cycle Goals

It is important for all cluster members to recognize the singular purpose of cluster time: learning applied to instructional strategies which will assist the school in achieving academic goals. The Cluster Meeting Record places the school goal and the cluster cycle goal at the forefront of the agenda to emphasize that all cluster actions are aligned to these goals. When the leadership team has developed a defined school plan and Long Range Plans to tackle specific student needs, the Cluster Meeting Record segments the work required to meet the goals into the weekly cluster meetings.

Cluster Outcomes

Creating meeting outcomes requires the same skill as writing student learning outcomes or objectives. The leader of the meeting should ask him/herself, “What do I want members to know and/or be able to do by the end of this cluster meeting that will improve instruction to address the specific student need identified in the cluster cycle goal?”

The critical elements of an outcome are as follows:

- Outcome is aligned to cluster cycle goal. If we achieve this outcome, how will that move us closer toward achieving the cluster cycle goal?
- Outcome identifies expected new learning for teachers. What will teachers become proficient in implementing in their classrooms?
- Outcome identifies expected result of teachers’ new learning on student achievement. What will students be able to do as a result of the teachers’ new learning being implemented in the classroom?
- Outcome identifies the tool for measuring students’ results. This may be students’ writing, results on a survey, observational checklist, and/or students’ responses to questions. What tool will we use to measure growth in proficiency?

From the Cluster Record Rubric:

The cluster outcome includes a:

- **Clear** link between what is being learned in cluster and the implementation in the classroom to address identified student learning need/ (critical elements: outcome is aligned to cluster cycle goal, identifies expected result of teachers’ new learning on student achievement and identifies the tool for measuring students’ results)
- Reference to the immediate and appropriate application of cluster learning/ (critical elements: the outcome identifies expected new learning for teachers, and identifies expected result of teachers’ new learning on student achievement and identifies the tool for measuring students’ results )
**Example of an outcome:**

By the end of the cluster meeting, teachers will develop the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy as a revision mini writing lesson, resulting in students adding details to their sentences resulting in improvement in voice as measured by a rubric aligned to the state writing rubric.

**Review of critical elements:**

- Outcome is aligned to cluster cycle goal: the goal is to increase student ability by adding more details to their writing in order to improve scores in voice
- Outcome identifies expected new learning for teachers: teachers will develop the “Show vs. Tell” strategy as a revision mini writing lesson
- Outcome identifies expected result of teachers’ new learning on student achievement: the result will be seen in students adding details to their writing resulting in improvement in voice
- Outcome identifies the tool for measuring students’ results. This may be students’ writing, results on a survey, observational checklist, and/or students’ responses to questions: student writing scored with a writing rubric aligned to the state writing rubric

There are three steps for designing an effective outcome:

1. **What?**
   - Identify the new learning you expect teachers to be able to learn, develop and implement as a result of this meeting.

2. **Resulting in?**
   - Define what the result of the learning will be in STUDENT terms. This creates purpose behind the teacher learning in cluster and aligns all cluster learning with the school plan for raising student achievement.

3. **As measured by?**
   - Decide how the application of this learning will be measured in STUDENT terms by the next meeting. This will assist all cluster members in knowing what the follow-up from the cluster meeting will be.

Within the following example, the three steps are marked using the questions/symbols above:

By the end of the cluster meeting, **1** teachers will develop the “Show vs. Tell” elaboration strategy, **2** resulting in students adding details to their sentences resulting in improvement in **voice** as measured by **3** as measured by a rubric aligned to state writing rubric.

**Note:**

The phrasing in italics provided within the cluster meeting outcome section of the form demonstrates the connection between teacher learning and the identified student need. It is phrased as follows:

- By the end of the cluster meeting,
- teachers will be able to ______________,
- resulting in _______________,
- as measured by _______________
Connection to the TAP Instructional Rubric:

The skilled cluster leader knows when to apply and how to embed indicators from the TAP Instructional Rubric during cluster meetings. This integration should be made clear to the cluster members and can be documented as part of the Cluster Meeting Record under the rubric section.

For a sample of what this connection to the TAP Instructional Rubric would look like on a Cluster Meeting Record, see the example on page 57.

Activity/Agenda:

This is the part of the meeting record that looks most like a typical meeting agenda. It is a bulleted list of actions and activities that will take place during the meeting to achieve the meeting outcome. Please do not confuse such activities with the meeting outcome. The activities indicate what you and cluster members will do during the meeting; the meeting outcome sets a purpose and defines the results of those activities.

Materials:

A well-constructed Cluster Meeting Record determines the materials the cluster members need to develop the new learning. We suggest that you include only the materials that participants are required to bring. The master/mentor teacher may provide additional materials and resources.

Essential Learning/Meeting Details

Recording essential details from the meeting allows all members to see and agree on what they have accomplished within the cluster meeting. Cluster members can refer to this section over time to recall decisions that were made. While this section can be extremely helpful, it is not mandatory or a part of the Cluster Meeting Records Rubric.

Well-documented cluster meetings include:

- Recorded details that are clear and understandable
- All decisions clearly marked
- New learning for teachers identified with labeled critical attributes
- Wording that is clear, concise, and objective

Outcome/Follow-Up in the Classroom as a Result of the Actual Meeting

There are two essential components to cluster follow-up. First, it is the responsibility of every cluster member to take an active role applying cluster learning and assessing the results. Secondly, it is the responsibility of master/mentor teachers to provide follow-up support to teachers as they implement the new learning. The critical elements of cluster follow-up are:
• References specific assignment cluster members are to complete prior to next cluster and specific student data and the specific student work cluster members are to bring to the next cluster
• References specific follow-up support by Master and Mentor in cluster members’ classrooms following cluster

**From the Cluster Record Rubric:**

For career teachers includes:

- **Immediate** and specific implementation of cluster learning/ *(critical element: references specific assignment cluster members are to complete prior to next cluster)*
- The collection and analysis of student data to monitor the intervention/ *(critical element: references specific student data and the specific student work cluster members are to bring to the next cluster)*

For master/mentor includes:

- Scheduled appointments *before the next cluster meeting* to provide teachers with further assistance in the form of classroom–based demonstration, team teaching, coaching/ *(critical elements: references specific follow-up support by master and mentor in cluster members’ classrooms following cluster)*

At the end of each cluster meeting, teachers should be expected to take the new learning and implement it in their classroom. This means that cluster time needs to include not only the introduction of a strategy, or the modification/re-teaching of one, but also time for teachers to develop it in the context of their classroom content and the specific needs of their students. Additionally, teachers are expected to assess the impact of the strategy with their students through utilizing formative assessments.

Master and mentor teachers must not only be concerned that the new learning is being implemented in the classroom, but more importantly, they must be assured that the new learning is being implemented ACCURATELY. Accurate application increases the likelihood of increased student achievement and the cluster members’ success in transferring the new learning to their teaching scenarios. Master and mentor teachers need to provide varying levels of support on the continuum of support for cluster members based on the needs of the members.

**Continuum for Learning a New Skill**

- Build background knowledge
- Demonstrate the skill in the classroom
- Observe the skill within a lesson and provide feedback
- Model the skill in a cluster
- Team-teach a lesson using the skill, providing feedback and further modeling

Considering this continuum, follow-up should be planned and scheduled at the end of every cluster meeting for all members and differentiated according to need. Determining varying
support levels requires the cluster leader to informally assess the other cluster members’ understanding of the new learning. This is especially important during the development time in cluster as it provides the cluster leader the opportunity to see to what extent teachers know how to apply the new learning. Using the Cluster Meeting Record, follow-up is documented for reference and evaluation at a later time.

Cluster Long Range Plan

5th Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Need</th>
<th>Learn</th>
<th>Develop</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cluster Cycle Goal:</strong> By the end of the cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency point in the area of voice and students already scoring a 3 in the area of voice will maintain their scores on a teacher-made writing assessment scored by the State Writing Rubric due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching elaboration, hook and transitional word strategies. Cluster members will focus on Academic Feedback from the Instructional Rubric.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>▲ Pre-test data - Teacher-made assessment aligned with state writing rubric</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 3 out of 105 5th graders scored a 0 on the Voice domain</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 61 out of 105 5th graders scored 1.0 or 1.5 on the Voice domain</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 24 out of 105 5th graders scored 2.0 or 2.5 on the Voice domain</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 17 out of 105 5th graders scored 3 on the Voice domain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong> 1/10 1/12 Teachers will analyze the student writing pre-test data. They will categorize student work into high, middle, and low scores for each domain of the State writing rubric with a focus on voice scores. The Master teacher will model the “Revision Mini Lesson” strategy for writing. Master teacher will emphasize the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “Revision Mini Lesson” strategy. Career teachers will bring back student responses from revision mini lesson looking for student errors in editing their writing with focus on the voice domain of the State Writing Rubric. M/M teachers will team teach or model in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong> 1/17 1/19 Teachers will analyze student responses to the “Revision Mini Lesson”. The Master teacher will model the “Question Hook” strategy for voice in beginning paragraphs. Master teacher will emphasize the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop a lesson to include the use of question hooks to grab the reader at the beginning of the paragraph. Teachers will analyze student writing for voice in introductions. Writings will be categorized into strong and weak introductions, and samples of student work will be brought to the next cluster. M/M teachers will team teach or model in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong> 1/24 1/26 Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Question Hook” strategy. Characteristics will be listed for students that appear to “have it” and those that “don’t have it”. The Master teacher will model the “Onomatopoeia Hook” strategy for developing voice in a topic sentence using several writing prompts. Master teacher will emphasize the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include specific writing prompts that students can apply the “Onomatopoeia Hook” strategy in a mini-lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the onomatopoeia hook strategy looking for added voice in student writing. M/M teachers will model and/or observe in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4</strong> 1/31 2/2 Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Onomatopoeia Hook” strategy with focus on those students who “get it” and those “who don’t get it”. The Master teacher will model the “Onomatopoeia and Question Hook” strategy for developing voice in a topic sentence using several writing prompts. Master teacher will emphasize the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include specific writing prompts that students can apply the “Onomatopoeia Hook” strategy in a mini-lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the onomatopoeia hook strategy looking for added voice in student writing. M/M teachers will model and/or observe in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Teachers will analyze student responses to “Question and Onomatopoeia Hook” strategy with focus on adding voice to student writing. The Master teacher will model the “Hyperbole Hook” strategy for developing voice in a topic sentence using several writing prompts. Master teacher will emphasize the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include specific writing prompts that students can apply the “Hyperbole Hook” strategy in a mini-lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the Hyperbole hook strategy again looking at lower students and how this helps to add voice to their writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Program Review 6th grade cluster was reviewed–Cluster meeting outcome: By the end of the Cluster meeting, teachers will develop a lesson to be taught this week in the classroom using the “Transitional Words” mini-lesson strategy for the classroom, resulting in students’ varying sentence structure in writing. Teachers brought back student writing using hooks. Student work was analyzed to see if voice was added to writing. The master teacher identified the critical attributes of the lesson.</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Hyperbole Hook” strategy looking for added voice in student writing. The Master teacher will model the &quot;Transitional Word “ mini lesson for varying sentence structure and adding information without the use of “and”. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “transitional word” mini lesson. Teachers will include an emphasis on teacher modeling. Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Transitional Word” strategy and look for increased voice in student writing and bring back student writing using the “transitional word” strategy that varies sentence structure and adds voice: 2 high, 2 medium, and 2 low. M/M teachers will model and/or observe in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Transitional Word” strategy and look for increased voice and varied sentence structure in student writing. The Master teacher will model the “Transitional Word” mini lesson for adding direction. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of the lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “transitional word” mini lesson. Teachers will also develop their individualized paragraph as the model for the mini lesson Teachers will develop critical attributes presented by the master teacher into their lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the “transitional word” strategy that varies sentence structure and adds voice: 2 high, 2 medium, and 2 low. M/M teachers will team teach or model in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Transitional Word” strategy and look for increased voice and development in student writing. The Master teacher will model the “Transitional Word” mini lesson for transitions that give examples. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of both. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “transitional word” mini lesson. Teachers will also develop their individualized paragraph as the model for the mini lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the “transitional word” strategy that varies sentence structure and adds voice: 4 low students. M/M teachers will observe in teachers’ classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>3/14</td>
<td>Teachers will analyze the student responses to “Transitional Word” strategy and look for increased voice and development in student writing. The Master teacher will model the “Interesting!” elaboration strategy as a revision mini lesson. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of “Interesting!” Teachers will develop a lesson to include the “Interesting!” elaboration strategy in a revision mini lesson. Teachers will also develop their individualized paragraph as the model for the mini lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the “Interesting!” elaboration strategy that develops sentences and adds voice (2 low, 2 medium, and 2 high students).</td>
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</table>
**Week 11**  
3/21  
3/23  
**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 12**  
3/28-3/30  
Teachers will analyze the student benchmark writing examples looking at 4 low students to identify characteristics of the lower performing students. The Master teacher will model the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy as a revision mini lesson. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of “Show versus Tell.” Teachers will develop a lesson to include the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy in a revision mini lesson. Teachers will also develop their individualized paragraph as the model for the mini lesson. Teachers will bring back student writing using the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy that develops sentences and adds voice (2 low, 2 medium, and 2 high students). M/M teachers will team teach, model and/or observe in teachers’ classrooms.

**Week 13**  
4/4  
4/6  
Teachers will analyze the student benchmark writing examples looking at 4 low students to identify characteristics of the lower performing students and analyze student work from use of “Show vs. Tell” Strategy. The Master teacher will model a closure strategy as a revision mini lesson. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of closure elaboration mini lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “Closure” strategy as well as “Hook” strategy in revision mini lesson. Teachers will also develop samples to be used to continue to teach the elaboration strategy.

Teachers will develop critical attributes presented by the master teacher into their lesson. Bring back student writing using the strategies that develop sentences and add voice (2 low, 2 medium, and 2 high students). M/M teachers will team teach, model and/or observe in teachers’ classrooms.

**Week 14**  
4/11  
4/13  
Teachers will analyze student work from strategies. The Master teacher will model the “Sensory Detail” strategy as a revision mini lesson. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of “Sensory Detail” strategy. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “Sensory Detail” mini lesson. Teachers will also develop samples to be used to continue to teach the elaboration strategy. Teachers will bring back student writing using the “Sensory Detail” strategy that develops sentences and adds voice (2 high, 2 medium, 2 low). M/M teachers will team teach, model and/or observe in teachers’ classrooms.

**Week 15**  
4/18  
4/20  
Teachers will analyze student work from “Sensory Detail” strategy. The Master teacher will model the “No Explanation” strategy as a revision mini lesson. The master teacher will identify the critical attributes of “No Explanation” mini lesson. Teachers will develop lesson to include the “No Explanation” mini lesson. Teachers will also develop samples to be used to continue to teach the elaboration strategy. Teachers will bring back student writing using the strategy that develops sentences and adds voice representing (2 high, 2 medium, and 2 low students).

**Week 15**  
4/25  
4/27  
Teachers will close out IGP’s for 04-05 school year. With final evaluations being completed, teachers will begin IGP for 05-06 school year.
Post – test results from teacher-made assessment aligned to State Writing Rubric:

- 10 students out of 105 students scored 1.0 or 1.5 in Voice
- 62 students out of 105 students scored 2.0 or 2.5 in Voice
- 33 students out of 105 students scored a 3.0 in Voice

Cluster members also analyzed students’ scores in Content and Development and Organization to evaluate impact of strategies to improve Voice

Pre-test results:

- 54 students out of 105 5th graders scored below a 3 on the Content and Development domain of a teacher-made assessment aligned to the State Writing Rubric.
- 69 students out of 105 5th graders scored below a 3 on the Organization domain of a teacher-made assessment aligned to the State Writing Rubric

Post-test results:

- 76 students out of 105 students scored 3 or higher in Content and Development
- 84 students out of 105 students scored 3 or higher in Organization
School Goal: Based on 2004 – 2005 state English Language Arts test results:

- Grade 4 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 17% proficient to 20% proficient, 35% Basic to 45% Basic, and 45% Below Basic will decrease to 35%.
- Grade 5 students will increase from 1% advanced to 3% advanced, 5% proficient to 8% proficient, 38% basic to 48% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 46% Below Basic.
- Grade 6 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 13% proficient to 16% proficient, 38% basic to 46% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 48% Below Basic.

Percentages referenced are required for the school to meet AYP.

All students will increase their scores by at least 100 scale score points which represents a year’s growth.

Yearly Cluster Goal:

By May 2005, all students will improve performance on the benchmark English Language Arts test aligned to the high stakes test by at least 10%, which is one proficiency level, and students performing at the highest level will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching main idea, supporting details and the writing process. All students will demonstrate at least a year’s growth as measured by the benchmark.

School Goal: Based on 2004 – 2005 state English Language Arts test results:

- Grade 4 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 17% proficient to 20% proficient, 35% Basic to 45% Basic, and 45% Below Basic will decrease to 35%.
- Grade 5 students will increase from 1% advanced to 3% advanced, 5% proficient to 8% proficient, 38% basic to 48% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 46% Below Basic.
- Grade 6 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 13% proficient to 16% proficient, 38% basic to 46% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 48% Below Basic.

Percentages referenced are required for the school to meet AYP.

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Cluster Cycle Goal: By the end of the cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency point in the area of voice and students already scoring a 3 in the area of voice will maintain their scores on a teacher-made writing assessment scored by the State Writing Rubric due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching elaboration, hook and transitional word strategies. Cluster members will focus on Academic Feedback from the Instructional Rubric.
**Cluster Meeting Outcome:** *What will I learn?* By the end of the cluster meeting, teachers will develop the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy as a revision mini writing lesson, resulting in students adding details to their sentences resulting in improvement in voice in writing as measured by a rubric aligned to the state writing rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Reinforcing</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>PART G</th>
<th>What will I do?</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>What will I need to bring with me?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Feedback</td>
<td><em>Teachers will analyze student responses to “Interesting!” elaboration strategy and identify characteristics of high, medium, and low students. Master teacher will model the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy as a revision mini lesson, and identify the critical attributes of the strategy. Teachers will develop sentences in their current teacher writing model to implement &quot;Show versus Tell” based on the critical attributes and the needs of their students.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student responses from “Interesting!” elaboration strategy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR NEXT CLUSTER:**
Student writing using the “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy (2 low, 2 medium, and 2 high student samples)

---

**Outcome/Follow-up as a Result of Actual Meeting:** *PART H*

**What will take place by the next cluster meeting?** List what career, mentor and master teachers will do and when they will do it. Use future tense.

**Classroom Teacher:**

*How will I apply the new learning in my classroom this week?* Career Teachers will teach “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy in a revision mini-lesson in the writing block this week. An emphasis will be placed on using teacher generated writing to model for students. Teachers will bring back 2 low, 2 medium, and 2 high student samples in order to analyze characteristics of these groups of students.

**Mentor/Master Teacher:**

*How will mentor/masters support application in the classroom?*

Master teacher will do a model lesson in Ms. S’s room at 1:00 on Thursday, modeling the “Show versus Tell” strategy with emphasis on teacher modeling. Master teacher will work with identified low students to teach “Show versus Tell” elaboration strategy in Ms. B’s room on Thursday at 11:15 and in Ms. C’s room on Thursday at 10:15. Mentor teacher will observe Ms. B teaching the “Show versus Tell” strategy on Thursday at 1:00 and provide feedback and coaching after the lesson.

**IGP Application/Reflection on back:**

*What were the students able to do? What were they NOT able to do? Why? - Who was successful? Who was not? What are the plans for students not yet successful?*

**NOTE:** In the interest of saving the environment, it is not required to have all of the goals written in complete form on every meeting record.
Part B: Implementing Effective Clusters

"The best thing to invest in right now is collegiality. The number one skill that teachers will need is to be team-based, collegial, sharing their knowledge and wisdom." - Alan November

Introduction:

In Chapter 1 of this section the focus was on learning how to utilize TAP cluster documentation to plan an effective cluster. While effective planning is essential, it will be meaningless if the plan cannot be implemented effectively. This chapter is designed to assist cluster leaders with how to turn that plan into action to effectively implement cluster meetings. This chapter is structured to first provide an overview of the essential elements of cluster and how they fit together to create an effective cluster meeting. The framework for this discussion is the cluster protocol. As you will see, the suggested cluster protocol, as are all TAP processes, is aligned to the STEPS for Effective Learning. (See below)

The second half of this chapter will focus more on the specific indicators and descriptors of the cluster observation rubric. Here cluster leaders will learn how the critical elements manifest themselves in the indicators. This will also provide the tools needed to conduct meaningful self analyses and coach members of the leadership team in cluster operations. On this note, it is important to remember that the indicators on the cluster observation rubric are not to serve as a checklist. The cluster leader who includes each of the elements without clearly connecting them in meaningful ways can never reach the “exemplary” level. The elements in isolation lose some of their power. In other words, the “whole is more than the sum of the parts.” Therefore, the indicators should be viewed holistically, and this can only come with a deep understanding of what a high quality cluster meeting should look like by making meaningful and relevant connections among all of the parts.

To accomplish this, administrators, master teachers and mentor teachers should routinely evaluate clusters that other master and mentor teachers are leading. (See Section I: the Leadership Team for more information on how to monitor clusters) Each cluster leader should be evaluated once a month using the Cluster Observation Rubric. The evaluation should be followed by a coaching session, using the Cluster Observation Rubric indicators as the basis of the discussion. Another particularly powerful resource is the TAP Instructional Rubric. Keep in mind that effective cluster leaders make the connection between effective teaching in a classroom and effective teaching in a cluster. A cluster leader should think of the cluster members as his/her “students” for which he/she is “teaching” for the purpose of their obtaining new learning. When a cluster leader incorporates the elements of effective teaching (as presented in the TAP Instructional Rubric) into his/her presentation in a cluster, cluster members’ understanding is strengthened. Both sets of rubrics are also good tools for guiding the cluster leaders’ self-reflection.

At the end of the chapter, there are also several cluster group scenarios which you can use to check your understanding of appropriate cluster topics and activities.
*See page 81 for the Cluster “Sample Protocol” and page 82-83 for the Cluster Observation Rubric.
### Cluster Meeting “Sample Protocol”

**Revised July 2005**

*Note: Actual times should be adjusted depending on the specific content of the individual meeting needs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **(10 minutes)** | 1. The cluster leader references the Long Range Plan and reviews activities of the day. ▲
2. The cluster members identify trends in student work as aligned to criteria set at the last meeting. The master/mentor teacher asks probing and clarifying questions to assist teachers in deeper learning of their teaching practice and its impact on students. ◆▲
3. The cluster leader then assists teachers in identifying the core student need and discusses how that need relates to the day’s activities. ◆▲ |

| (20 minutes) | 1. The cluster leader provides a segment of new learning:
- Cluster leader provides theoretical understanding of the targeted student skill and provides reference to the research where the strategy being studied/applied originated. Here the leader should also make connections between the new learning and the TAP Instructional Rubric.
- Cluster leader illustrates the effectiveness of the strategy by referencing student achievement gains as a result of field testing of the strategy. Student work samples showing increased proficiency should be presented.
- Cluster leader presents teachers with a handout enumerating the critical attributes of the strategy and provides a quick verbal preview of what will take place during the demonstration.
- Cluster members experience the application of the new learning from a student point of view while the cluster leader demonstrates (or has arranged for a cluster member to demonstrate) the application of the new learning. During this demonstration, the leader frequently stops and explains what she/he is doing and how it relates to the student need, prior teacher/student learning and the TAP Instructional Rubric.
- Cluster members ask clarifying questions regarding the strategy application.
- Cluster leader asks probing questions regarding the student experience (cluster members) of the application with a focus on the specific identified skill of the cluster goal and how it relates to the trends in student needs that were identified during the analysis of student work. |

| (25 minutes) | 1. Cluster members develop the strategy for application in their classroom using actual materials necessary for application with their students:
- Cluster members ask clarifying questions
- Cluster leaders probe for deeper understanding
- Cluster members may practice the application with other members of the group taking the student role.
- Master or mentor teacher uses coaching skills to assist in deeper understanding and thorough development for accurate application. Additionally, during these interactions, the master/mentor teachers internally note the type of follow-up support needed for each member. |

| (5 minutes) | 1. Cluster members debrief the process, summarize the learning and make plans for application in their classrooms:
- Teachers are assigned to bring back specific examples of student work to be assessed with clear criteria aligned to the pre/post assessments and state standards. This student work must be able to be used to frame the next cluster’s learning.
- Master and mentor teachers make specific appointments and define the focus of the assistance in order to assist all cluster members with their application of the strategy in their classrooms. |

While this is a “sample” protocol, cluster leaders need to be aware that effective clusters include three essential parts:

1. An analysis of student work that informs the new learning,
2. New learning (New learning could be an extension of prior learning based on a need that was identified in the student work. Therefore, “tweaking” a portion of a strategy is acceptable, but there must be some modification to the strategy that the cluster members learn.),
3. Time for teachers to develop the new learning.
### Cluster Observation Rubric

(for use when observing a cluster group meeting)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader as Presenter:</th>
<th>Leader as Facilitator:</th>
<th>Leader as Facilitator:</th>
<th>Expertise as Presenter:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exemplary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unsatisfactory</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader as Presenter:</strong></td>
<td>The leader demonstrates expertise when presenting new learning as evidenced by his or her ability to:</td>
<td><strong>Leader as Facilitator:</strong></td>
<td>The leader does not demonstrate knowledge about new learning being presented as evidenced by his or her inability to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- explain the material</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Begin the meeting with adequate link to previous learning through the long-range plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- provide relevant examples</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Be unprepared and without adequate materials and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- clearly identify and explain the critical attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide an agenda with adequate information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- redirect teacher questions when necessary</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Establish a purpose as to why members are engaged in the activities/learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ask higher order questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sufficiently assist members in developing competency during the cluster time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader as Facilitator:</strong></td>
<td>The leader demonstrates expertise when presenting new learning as evidenced by his or her ability to:</td>
<td><strong>Leader as Facilitator:</strong></td>
<td>The leader does not demonstrate knowledge about new learning being presented as evidenced by his or her inability to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Begin the meeting with link to previous learning and reference to the long-range plan in a brief and systemic manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Begin the meeting with adequate link to previous learning through the long-range plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Be prepared with appropriate materials and activities that have been applied to cluster members’ students.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Be unprepared and without adequate materials and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide an agenda with measurable outcomes, aligned assignments and definitive follow-up.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide an agenda with adequate information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establish a strong sense of purpose which connects what members are doing to the classroom and student learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Establish a purpose as to why members are engaged in the activities/learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Effectively and actively assist all members to develop competency during cluster time.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sufficiently assist members in developing competency during the cluster time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member Participation/Preparation:</strong></td>
<td>The leader demonstrates expertise when presenting new learning as evidenced by his or her ability to:</td>
<td><strong>Member Participation/Preparation:</strong></td>
<td>The leader does not demonstrate knowledge about new learning being presented as evidenced by his or her inability to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lead all members to participate and actively apply learning that increases instructional proficiency in their classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Lead members to participate in learning that applies to their classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Prepare members to come to cluster prepared with completed preliminary assignments which are directly connected to the students they teach.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Prepare members to come to cluster prepared to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Utilize significant student information/artifacts to inform decisions during the cluster meeting.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Utilize student information/artifacts to inform decisions during the cluster meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Content:</strong></td>
<td>The leader demonstrates expertise when presenting new learning as evidenced by his or her ability to:</td>
<td><strong>Quality of Content:</strong></td>
<td>The leader does not demonstrate knowledge about new learning being presented as evidenced by his or her inability to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide a logical, clearly defined continuum of teacher learning that connects what members are doing to the classroom and student learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide a logical continuum that addresses ways of increasing student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provide evidence of increases in...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**5 - Exemplary**

**3 - Proficient**

**1 - Unsatisfactory**

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increases student learning.
- Provide documented evidence of significant increases in student achievement.

Cluster/Classroom Connection:
The leader demonstrates expertise when presenting new learning as evidenced by his or her ability to:
- Ensure there is an immediate and proficient application of teacher learning into the classroom as a result of what takes place during cluster.
- Make specific plans for M/M classroom follow-up to ensure all members effectively transfer new learning for their students in the classroom.

- Provide a logical continuum that increases student learning.
- Provide evidence of increases in student achievement.

Cluster/Classroom Connection:
The leader demonstrates adequate knowledge in presenting new learning as evidenced by his or her ability to:
- Ensure there is application of teacher learning into the classroom as a result of what takes place during cluster.
- Make plans for M/M follow-up to ensure effective transfer regarding the classroom/cluster connection.

The Cluster Observation Rubric: Leader as Presenter

In order for a cluster to be effective, the leader must not only be expert in instructional strategies, but also in teaching career teachers these instructional strategies so that they can effectively teach them in their classrooms. Following is a brief explanation of each of the bullets under the “Leader as Presenter” indicator of the cluster observation rubric.

Ability to Explain the Material:

The cluster leader must be able to present a coherent explanation of the new learning so cluster members can appropriately, effectively and efficiently transfer new learning to their own classrooms as a result of the meeting. Whether the cluster leader is presenting a research base that supports an instructional strategy being introduced as part of the cluster learning, the instructional strategy, or a “chunk” of the strategy, there are several things the cluster leader should do in order to increase the likelihood that the “best practice” the cluster leader brings to cluster remains a best practice as career teachers implement it into their own classrooms.

The cluster leader must spend time before the cluster meeting researching and field testing anything to be presented. The field test allows the cluster leader to assess and gather information about the strategy’s impact on student achievement, identify the necessary critical attributes that she/he will need to model, appropriately segment the strategy for cluster learning, and decide when/how modifications need to be made to meet the needs of the students in that particular school. When the cluster leader presents research, he or she should make connections between what happens in a real classroom and the literature/research that he or she presents. These connections can only be accomplished if the cluster leader has field tested the strategy with students represented by the cluster members and identified those connections before presenting them in cluster.

When the cluster leader presents an instructional strategy to cluster members, he/she should pay particular attention to the critical attributes of the strategy (identified during the field test) in order to effectively teach it to others. While the critical attributes will be
discussed in more detail under the descriptor “Ability to Clearly Identify the Critical Attributes,” (see below) all information should be presented in a logical order that is sequenced and segmented (“chunked”) to allow teachers to accurately apply the new learning in their classrooms after each cluster. Although the segmenting of a strategy is first based on the research and the cluster leader’s field testing, it is also dependent on the change in student performance from the cluster members’ students as a result of the strategy. For example, if the student data showed less than the expected growth after a chunk of the strategy was implemented, the cluster leader would need to spend additional cluster time either re-teaching or modifying the strategy chunk until students showed improvement. It is important to remember that the goal of cluster is for teachers to implement strategies in their classrooms to increase student achievement by ultimately building student expertise in applying the strategy. Therefore, a cluster leader needs to segment the strategy not only for teacher learning but also, and more importantly, for student learning.

In addition to being presented logically and in a manageable chunk, the cluster leader also needs to explain the strategy so that teachers will be able to successfully teach it in their classrooms as a result of cluster. To achieve this, effective cluster leaders utilize a two-tiered model. While this model may have two distinct layers, the most effective cluster leaders are the ones that are able to weave the two tiers seamlessly together.

The first tier of the model is showing teachers what the strategy would look like from a student’s perspective. Some ways this can be accomplished is by having teachers participate in the modeling as if they are students, bringing a small group of students into cluster, or the group visiting a classroom for a demonstration. This part of the model enables teachers to see what the strategy would look like in action and try to anticipate some of the students’ reactions and challenges to the strategy. Here, the cluster leader would work to create a realistic presentation of how the strategy looked when he/she field tested it. Rather than focusing on how to teach the strategy, this part of the model is focused mostly on the students’ perceptions and actions. Therefore, the second tier of the model centers on building teacher ability to teach the strategy in an exemplary fashion. It is also important to note that before the cluster leader models the strategy, he/she must give the cluster members a purpose for watching the model. Effective cluster members use this opportunity to have cluster members explain why the critical attributes must be included in the lesson, as well as make connections to the focus area from the Instructional Rubric. Having a purpose for watching a model actively engages the teachers in the new learning.

The second tier of the strategy is the cluster leader’s thought process (meta-cognition) as he/she is going through the strategy or portion of the strategy. Here the cluster leader’s focus is on explaining and questioning teachers about the critical attributes of the strategy so they can best teach it to their students. For example, from his/her field test information the cluster leader would be able to show teachers the specific questions to ask students who are having more difficulty with the skill being addressed and ask teachers why those particular questions are important. It is in this tier of the model that the cluster leader would ask teachers how his/her actions pertain to the teachers’ specific students, as well as make additional connections between the model and the TAP Instructional Rubric. In essence this second tier is focused on preparing teachers to teach the strategy in their classrooms in the most exemplary manner possible so that it has a positive impact on student achievement.

**Ability to Provide Relevant Examples:**

Relevant examples (examples of student work from a cluster leader’s field testing and observations when providing follow-up in cluster members’ classrooms) are used to assist teachers in their understanding of the new learning of strategies and provide purpose for its
implementation. They also assist teachers in identifying modifications, characteristics, and proficiency levels of student work.

Since the cluster leader field tests the strategies and is frequently in teachers’ classrooms providing support with the strategies, he/she is able to collect examples of student work through formative assessments and observations to use during his/her presentation in cluster. In order to make these presentations meaningful, teachers must understand and be able to identify students’ proficiency levels based on the high stakes test before starting the strategy. When the cluster leader presents student work with explanations for how he/she analyzed and utilized the work, this provides the career teacher criteria on which to analyze and utilize their student work throughout the cluster cycle. This information is incorporated during the modeling of the strategy and later when teachers develop the new learning for use in their classroom.

In addition to creating a common understanding about teacher expectations of student performance, these examples are pertinent and meaningful (relevant) because they include students that all of the teachers know and reinforce how the new learning will address the already identified student needs. In this way, the cluster leader demonstrates how student work led to the identification of the critical attributes and/or modifications for a strategy. Therefore, the student work (relevant examples) should be presented in such a way that it provides evidence for why each of the critical attributes for the new learning must be included in the members’ implementation in their classrooms. The cluster leader should be able to explain how the critical attributes were developed based on the needs of the students. An effective cluster leader will make the connection between his/her own field testing and the impact on student learning to the purpose for each of the critical attributes of the new learning. The work should also identify problems that students are likely to encounter so that the teachers can plan for them during development time based on the cluster leader’s explanation of the critical attributes and modifications he/she made during field testing. When student work from a cluster leader’s field testing is presented in this manner with clear connections to the critical attributes then this makes the examples relevant to the cluster members.

As a cluster leader presents relevant examples during the modeling of the new learning and reinforced during development, he/she also has the opportunity to model the analysis and use of student work for cluster members. By modeling how to use formative assessments, a cluster leader communicates his/her expectations for how cluster members should present student work in subsequent clusters. In addition, the cluster members will see how they can utilize the characteristics of their student work to make decisions in the development of new learning. By doing this, the cluster leader moves from a theoretical basis to one with more direct and practical application. The cluster leader is also able to add greater detail to the examples by connecting the reasoning, application, and research of the new learning to them.
Example:

“From the analysis of our student work, we have found that many of our students are having difficulty in identifying the similarities and differences between two concepts. I also saw this in student work as I observed in your classrooms this past week and from my own field testing. So as I continued field testing the strategy for compare/contrast this week, I modeled for the students my own thinking process and the questions I asked myself to identify characteristics of concepts. I also underlined the characteristics in two different colors to separate the characteristics for the two concepts. When I did this students were able to not only identify the characteristics, but they were able to classify the characteristic according to the corresponding concept. At this point in the cluster leader’s modeling, he/she would present evidence from the student work (relevant examples) for how this modification to the strategy impacted student work. In doing this, the cluster leader has also strengthened the members’ purpose for including this modification in their own implementation of the strategy. The questions the cluster leader asked him/her self would be part of the critical attributes of the modification and would also be connected to the leader’s use of relevant examples.

Ability to Clearly Identify and Explain the Critical Attributes:

It is essential that cluster members understand the critical attributes of a strategy. A strategy’s critical attributes are not simply the steps one takes to implement it: They are the essential elements of the strategy that make it work effectively. They explain why each step is necessary, how it should be executed, and problems teachers should anticipate at each step of the student learning. Only when these attributes are identified, fully explained, and modeled will the cluster members be able to move to deeper levels of understanding - the result being increasing the likelihood of their ability to effectively transfer the learning to a variety of instructional settings and subjects.

The critical attributes are the elements of a lesson that a great teacher does to ensure the effectiveness of the strategy at each step. These are the elements that keep a best practice a best practice as it is implemented. They are also the parts of teaching the strategy where effectiveness could be diminished or lost. Critical attributes help to answer questions such as, but not limited to:

- Why is this done at this point?
- What am I looking for in students’ work or responses at this point in the lesson and why?
- How is this done effectively?
- How do I anticipate and head off the problems in student work that were identified at the start of cluster at opportune times during the lesson?

Steps of a strategy instead focus on the process of the strategy or teaching the strategy and are typically shared with students. Critical attributes tend to involve teacher metacognition and “on the spot” decision-making during the lesson. Teachers should understand the critical attributes in order to plan for them during development time in light of the characteristics they identified in their student work. The critical attributes also can assist the cluster members in how and what they coach career teachers on during development of the strategy.

Many master and mentor teachers take it for granted that the specific best instructional practices they utilize during the implementation of the strategy (questioning, academic feedback, grouping etc.) are being implemented in all the other classrooms in the building at
the same level of effectiveness as their implementation. However, if this were truly the case then all teachers would be teaching at the same level as the master teacher, with the same student results. Therefore, to enable teachers to emulate all of the high quality practices the master/mentor is incorporating in their lessons, cluster leaders have to explicitly label and explain critical attributes to the cluster members during the modeling and development of the strategy. Again, these would include the critical attributes of the specific strategy and the elements of effective teaching. When possible, the model should make connections between these elements of effective teaching and the TAP Instructional Rubric in order to continually support teachers’ understanding.

The cluster leader should also continually refer to these critical attributes as he/she models the new learning with the meta-cognition behind each part of the strategy and as teachers develop the strategy for their classrooms. Again, as a part of the process, the cluster leader should first field test the strategy in a classroom over a period of time. During this application, the cluster leader must identify each of the critical attributes of the strategy so that he/she can present them effectively and clearly during the presentation in cluster while connecting their importance to the relevant examples (student work examples) and the characteristics of student work presented by the cluster members. Prior to this presentation, effective cluster leaders typically will include a visual of the critical attributes for teachers. This may be in the form of a handout, a chart or overhead transparency. The cluster leader would set a specific purpose for the cluster members when watching the model and make reference to the visual provided. This will help to ensure that teachers are truly absorbing the critical attributes and will give the cluster leader a means for informally assessing each member’s understanding during the development stage of cluster. Additionally, if the critical attributes are modeled effectively, development time would not simply be a time for lesson planning. Instead it would be an opportunity for teachers to utilize their student data and appropriately incorporate the critical attributes into their lesson to make it effective in raising student achievement. An effective cluster leader also includes a review of the critical attributes at the end of cluster to ensure members’ understanding. This is very similar to the closure needed at the end of a lesson with students.

**Ability to Redirect Teacher Questions When Necessary:**

The effective cluster leader is able to use communication skills (see section on Tips for Effective Communication) to assist the cluster in moving toward its goal of improving student achievement in a specific and targeted area. Often in clusters, members’ comments and questions will tend to cause the discussion to wander (e.g. focus on why a specific strategy or technique won’t work with their students). An effective cluster leader will recognize when this is happening and use high quality questioning and communication skills to prevent off-topic conversations. The focus of a cluster meeting should always be on improving student achievement and how the new learning will impact this. The skills of questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing and valet parking are used most often to redirect the group back onto the topic presently being studied.

**Ability to Ask Higher Order Questions:**

An effective cluster leader effectively uses higher order questions in order to lead cluster members to deeper levels of understanding about strategies and student performance. The questions should cause cluster members to think critically and make connections between teacher learning and student achievement. Questions should lead cluster members to identify why the critical attributes of the strategy are necessary for a strategy to have a positive impact on student achievement. Additionally, the questions should guide cluster members towards making connections between the model and their specific students’ needs. These questions should generate discussion among cluster members because they involve
application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (the 4 highest levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy). (Refer to the Resource section for additional information on Bloom’s Taxonomy)

**The Cluster Observation Rubric: Leader as Facilitator**

As the cluster leader, the master and/or mentor teacher is responsible for making certain that the meeting is effective, has a strong sense of purpose and is time efficient. This indicator of the cluster rubric utilizes many practices associated with pacing and structure toward meeting these goals.

**Begins Meeting with Link to Previous Learning and References to the Long-Range Plan in a Brief and Systematic Manner:**

As a part of the cluster protocol, the cluster leader should take the first few minutes (in a brief and systematic manner) of cluster to review with members what they learned in previous cluster meetings, what they will do today, and how both of these fit into the cluster long-range plan and the school plan. Activating prior knowledge in this way provides members with a sense of accomplishment, purpose, and direction. The intent for reviewing the plan is to build deep understanding; therefore, it is important to think about the best way to create this meaning. For example, a discussion format with the facilitator asking higher order questions could be one method of building this meaning. Whatever the means of presenting this information, connecting teachers’ prior learning with the new cluster learning also helps members make connections between what they learned in previous clusters and students’ increased academic success. Just as it is important for classroom teachers to clearly communicate learning objectives to students and activate prior knowledge of previously learned materials, it is important for cluster leaders to clearly communicate the outcome for the meeting and make connections to prior cluster learning.

**Example:**

“Last week, in all your classes, you asked specially designed questions as a form of assessing your students’ abilities to make connections to text. Today, we are going to begin cluster analyzing the student responses. This informal assessment will provide us with some information about how part one of “Add It Up” has impacted student learning. When we find where students are still weak in their ability to make connections between the text and their prior knowledge, we will spend some time focusing on some modifications to part one of “Add It Up” so that students are even more successful in making deep and meaningful connections. Of course, our ultimate goal is to increase student achievement in reading comprehension with our cluster goal for this cycle being to increase students’ ability to make accurate inferences while incorporating more visuals in our teaching as referenced under Presenting Instructional Content on the TAP Instructional Rubric. Currently we are working in using Graphic Organizers and asking meaningful questions to build student capacity in making deep and meaningful connections from their prior knowledge that they can utilize as they move to make high quality inferences.”

Cluster leaders may also use the Cluster Meeting Record as a tool to review the school and cluster goals and to make the connection from these to the Cluster Meeting Outcome. Questioning of cluster members that leads them to explain why the cluster is working in a
specific area of student need may also be used to review these goals and previous cluster learning. As before, the cluster leader should push for a depth of understanding and help members make connections. It is also important that during the meeting the cluster leader provide internal summaries by stopping and connecting how the learning that day aligns to the larger school and cluster goals.

Example:

We have discovered that our students answer inferential questions better on tests when we ask more inferential questions orally and provide students with tools to answer these questions. How does this information apply to your students? How will this help us accomplish our goal? How does this connect to the patterns in student performance that we noted at the beginning of cluster?

Notice the use of a higher level question in this example.

This type of questioning also relates to the use of higher order questions under the Leader as Presenter on the Cluster Observation Rubric.

Is Prepared with Appropriate Materials and Activities That Have Been Applied to Cluster Members’ Students:

Part of making certain that a cluster is well-paced and effectively meets its intended outcome is to make sure that the cluster leader has the appropriate materials and has thoroughly planned the cluster. As mentioned earlier, it is imperative that the cluster leader has already field tested the new learning. This will provide relevant examples (see section Leader as Presenter: ability to provide relevant examples) of student work from the classroom, which can be used to enrich instruction for cluster members, thus adding to the cluster leader’s credibility. The activities and materials should have a direct link to the new learning and be sequenced and segmented/chunked in such a way to ensure that members leave cluster having developed the new learning to address a specific student need. Moreover, the new learning needs to be modeled in such a way so that it increases teachers’ ability to effectively teach the strategy. (See section on Leader as Presenter: ability to explain the material).

To ensure cluster time is used efficiently and effectively, the cluster leader needs to read all materials ahead of time and identify the essential information for the cluster members. By identifying essential information from the materials, and the critical attributes of the strategy, the cluster leader focuses the cluster only around pertinent information, and time is spent more efficiently. Some examples of materials that a cluster leader may provide cluster members are a handout of the critical attributes, a copy of his/her lesson plan for the strategy being presented, examples of student work, copies of the research basis for the strategy, and copies of handouts provided to students during his/her field testing. It is important to emphasize that just giving teachers handouts is not effective. All handouts should be used effectively by the cluster leader to move teachers to deeper levels of understanding of the new learning and the needs of their students.

Provides an Agenda with Measurable Outcomes, Aligned Assignments, and Definitive Follow-up:

The cluster meeting record serves as the agenda for the meeting. The record should be sent to the cluster members before the meeting, but the cluster leader should also have at least one extra copy. Each record should have an outcome for the meeting (discussed in Section2, Part A Documentation) that answers the questions:
• What should cluster members know and be able to implement in their classroom by the end of THIS cluster meeting that will improve instruction to address the specific student need identified in the cluster cycle goal?
• How will cluster members measure the impact of what they implemented in terms of student achievement?

The outcome should clearly and logically fit into the cluster long-range plan. The assignments should match the outcome. Cluster members should know specifically what type of student work they are to bring to the next cluster from their implementation of the new learning. Finally, the follow-up should be specific; indicating what each cluster member (including master/mentor teachers) should do before the next meeting. Because all members will be given time during cluster to develop the new learning every member should be leaving cluster with a clear implementation plan. Effective follow-up for teachers also includes an assignment to bring back student work to assess the impact of the strategy on student learning. These assignments should include clear criteria for both the type of work and the criteria for how teachers will categorize or assess the work (e.g. 2 student samples from students performing at the lowest level, at the mid-level and at the highest level).

For master/mentor teachers, their follow-up responsibility is to provide differentiated support to all cluster members each week in the implementation of the strategy. It should also specifically identify when (e.g. the specific time and date before the next cluster meeting the support will occur) and how the master and mentor teachers will provide follow-up (e.g. lesson planning, demonstrating, modeling, team teaching, conferencing and peer coaching) in each cluster members’ classrooms. During development time master/mentor teachers should be both supporting and informally assessing each teacher’s level of understanding and proficiency with the strategy. Based on this information, they should guide each teacher to the level of support that is most appropriate for him/her.

Establishes a Strong Sense of Purpose Which Connects What They Are Doing to the Classroom and Student Learning:

To establish a strong sense of purpose for what the cluster is doing, each cluster should begin with a link to the previous meetings, the cluster plan, and the school plan. (See paragraph under “Begins Meeting with Link to Previous Learning and References to the Long-range Plan in a Brief and Systematic Manner”.) For many teachers, the connection between their classroom and the school plan is not always clear. Therefore, it is important for the cluster leader to make connections between what the cluster is working on and how it will support students in meeting the school goal. Purpose is also provided when cluster leaders draw connections between teachers’ implementation of descriptors from the TAP Instructional Rubric and gains in student achievement. The exemplary cluster leader will embed modeling of specific descriptors from the TAP Instructional Rubric within the modeling of the new learning. (Specific indicators to be focused on to strengthen should be identified from evaluations/observations of teachers belonging to the cluster.) These connections are made when a cluster leader models the strategy and refers to specific descriptors from the TAP Instructional Rubric while clearly explaining how these descriptors impact student learning. (See Section 4, Part A for specific examples for how the Instructional Rubric can be embedded into the cluster learning.)

In addition to connecting the new learning to teacher needs, the deepest sense of purpose for cluster learning comes when members are able to connect it to their specific students’ needs. To achieve this, teachers will need to come to cluster prepared to present the impact of the previous cluster’s learning on students’ work. This includes samples of student performance on the formative assessments used to assess the impact of the strategy. The effective cluster leader will guide teachers through the analysis of this data to help them
identify trends in student performance. He/she will then connect the new learning for that
day to the trend in student need that was identified. The field test data will be used to show
how that day’s cluster learning increased student achievement in that specific area of need.
The cluster leader will then weave this information throughout his/her modeling and ask
teachers to do the same as they develop the new learning for the classroom. Therefore, the
presentation of student work from field testing also relates to the use of relevant examples
(Leader as Presenter) and a cluster leader’s ability to provide documentation (qualitatively
and quantitatively) that the new learning increases student achievement (Quality of
Content). The effective cluster leader naturally infuses all of these connections through
modeling, clear explanations, and the use of higher order questions throughout the cluster.

Effectively and Actively Assists All Members to Develop Competency
During Cluster Time:

An effective cluster leader develops a sense of responsibility for cluster members’ learning.
The leader must see their role as helping teachers become experts in using the strategies in
their own content areas to improve student achievement. The effective cluster leader will
model using clear explanations and examples that identify the critical attributes and include
questioning, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Most importantly, they need to provide time
for cluster members to effectively develop the new learning for their own classrooms within
the cluster (Refer to Cluster Protocol on page 81) During the development time, (STEP 3)
cluster leaders should circulate among the members to assist them in developing
competency. The cluster leader should continually make references to the intersection
between the critical attributes and the student needs identified from the cluster leader’s and
members’ student work presented to ensure that teachers develop the new learning
proficiently and that it is developed based on the needs of their students. Development time
is not simply lesson planning, instead the focus is on tailoring the strategy to meet each
teacher’s students’ needs. Therefore, in order for development time to be successful, all the
other aspects of cluster leading up to this point (i.e. the cluster leader’s ability to explain the
material, identify the critical attributes, create a sense of purpose, etc.) also need to be well
executed, so that teachers have the materials and experiences to assist them in developing
the strategy to be transferred effectively into their own classroom..

The effective cluster leader also recognizes that true new learning must be applied with
support, so they specifically plan for providing that support in every teacher’s classroom. To
identify support needed by each teacher, cluster leaders, through questioning and
discussion, should be informally assessing teachers’ abilities to implement the new learning
during this time and plan support outside of cluster according to each teacher’s needs.

The Cluster Observation Rubric: Member Participation
/Preparation

Proper preparation is essential to make the most of the limited time for clusters. It is just as
important for cluster members to come to cluster meetings prepared as it is for the cluster
leader. Cluster leaders can and should expect members to be prepared for cluster. If a
cluster member is consistently unprepared for the cluster meeting, the issue should be
addressed by the school’s administration.
All Members Participate and Actively Apply Learning That Increases Instructional Proficiency in Their Classroom:

The cluster leader should continually engage cluster members in the learning process. The new learning in cluster should be presented in such a way that cluster members are actively involved. The presentation must be more than discussing a topic; it should engage members in practicing and developing their skills. When a cluster member is reluctant to participate, the cluster leader should involve the member through higher order questions and collaborative work. For example, one effective means of inducing participation is to field test the strategy in one of the cluster member’s classrooms and have him/her present some specific observations about the impact of the strategy on student achievement. Another possibility is for the cluster leader, through follow-up support, to identify specific and high quality instructional practices occurring in each cluster member’s classroom. During the demonstration of the strategy the cluster leader can then activate each teacher’s expertise by asking purposeful probing questions about his/her practice and its affect on student performance. (See page 220, Section 5: TAP Resources for Tips for Communicating Effectively.)

Cluster members should see cluster as a time not only for obtaining new learning, but also that it is for developing and individualizing that new learning for their own students, with support from the master and mentor teachers. When cluster members have time to develop the learning with support, they are more likely to proficiently implement the new learning in their classroom. To ensure this will occur the master/mentor teacher should use development time to talk with teachers about how they will implement the strategy and ask probing higher order questions to identify the teacher’s level of understanding of the strategy. This information, along with the master/mentor teacher’s experience of observing the teacher’s instructional proficiency, will then guide them as they make appointments to provide follow-up support. It is imperative that the master and mentor teachers provide assistance in the classroom as the cluster members implement the new learning. This is to ensure that the best practice teachers have observed and planned in cluster remains a best practice when it is implemented in teachers’ classrooms. Classroom based follow-up support helps to ensure the most appropriate, efficient and effective transfer of new learning from the cluster to the classroom so that it has a positive impact on student achievement.

Members Are Prepared and Have Completed Preliminary Assignments Which Are Directly Connected to the Students They Teach:

There are three types of preliminary assignments. They are:

1) To bring back student work with a focus on specific student characteristics or reasons students are not mastering the specific skill
2) To bring materials needed to develop the strategy
3) To read/watch reference materials to increase teacher understanding of new learning being presented

At the end of each cluster meeting, the effective cluster leader makes specific assignments for cluster members to complete before the next meeting. The expectation that cluster members will always bring student artifacts that show specific student characteristics (difficulties and strengths) or reasons students are still not mastering the skill back to cluster as a result of the new learning should be established early. Master and mentor teachers should also include clear criteria about what members should look for in their student work and why these criteria are essential. Members should be asked to do a preliminary analysis of the student work before returning to the next cluster. During the
same timeframe, the master and/or mentor teacher will have reviewed the student data from their field testing and spent time in each cluster member’s classroom. Therefore, time at the next meeting can be more effectively spent on presenting the analysis of student work as opposed to analyzing the student work during cluster. Specific assignments help focus the discussion at the next meeting on what the students did as opposed to what the teachers did. The focus should ALWAYS be on the student work and what it reveals about the impact of previous cluster learning and the current student need.

Cluster members will also need to bring materials that support their development of the new learning. These materials could include items such as a guided reading book, a lesson plan, content standards, etc. These materials always include student artifacts.

In addition, the cluster leader may need to make preliminary assignments to set the stage for the new teacher learning. These activities might include reading part of an article, watching a portion of a lesson video, visiting an Internet site, etc. One important point to make at this juncture is that the activities must have a clearly assigned and communicated purpose. For example, if teachers are expected to read a part of an article, they would also be expected to identify key elements from that article. If they are to watch a video in which the teacher uses a particular reading strategy, the cluster members might be assigned to write down the steps that he/she went through or the questions he/she asked. Before assignments of this type are made, it is critical that the cluster leader has previewed the article and/or video. It may be necessary for cluster leaders to condense or summarize what members prepare in order to use cluster time and members’ time efficiently.

Cluster members should be informed of all required assignments and materials for the next cluster each week. These should also be noted on the Cluster Meeting Record, which the cluster leader sends to cluster members prior to each cluster meeting.

During the Meeting Significant Student Information/Artifacts Are Used to Inform Decisions:

In order to move cluster learning from a theoretical exercise to one of meaningful application, student information and artifacts must be used and referenced throughout a cluster.

First, EVERY cluster must include the use of student work/data stemming from formative assessments in order to guide the cluster process. At the conclusion of each cluster, an effective cluster leader will ask members to use clearly defined, state assessment aligned criteria (a critical attribute for almost every strategy) to analyze student work and to bring back samples representing various proficiency levels. In the beginning part of the next cluster, teachers will then present the analysis of this data in cluster and identify the characteristics of students’ work. It is important to note that this data can be collected by a variety of different means including teacher anecdotal records. The key element of the data is that it must be quantifiable and measured with criteria aligned to the state assessments’ standards so that it can be used in a meaningful way to inform cluster learning.

Through the presentation of analyzed student work, cluster members are able to identify both the impact of the prior strategy and the next student need to address. Additionally, using student work in this manner becomes an informal way to assess student learning as a part of the cluster long-range plan. Since it is impossible for cluster members to present every piece of student work during the limited time for cluster, teachers are expected to bring only a sample of their students’ work (e.g. 2 low samples, 2 medium, 2 high). To do so, members will need to complete some data analysis before the cluster meeting.
As the cluster meeting progresses, the effective cluster leader will constantly refer back to the student needs the cluster members identified through analysis. This allows the cluster members to focus on how to modify the strategy and develop the new learning for use with different groups based on identified student needs. The student artifacts also show changes in student achievement, thus allowing the cluster to make informed decisions about when to move to the next strategy or “chunk” of a strategy and when additional work or modifications on the same strategy are needed.

This leads us to a second way student work is used to inform decisions in cluster. Once the characteristics of student work have been analyzed and an area of need identified, the effective cluster leader will make a connection between how that day’s cluster learning addresses the identified student need. The cluster leader will then introduce the field test data that proves the efficacy of the strategy. It is critical that the student work presented is continually used to inform decisions made during the cluster. This includes student work presented by cluster leaders and members. In order to use student work throughout cluster, cluster leaders must provide relevant examples from field testing (Leader as Presenter) that provides documentation of the new learning’s impact on student achievement (Quality of Content). This is also why it is necessary for clusters members to come prepared with student work that has been analyzed and is ready to be presented (Member Participation/Preparation).

Finally, the same student data analyzed at the beginning of cluster is then used during the development stage. As teachers plan how they will use the strategy in the context of their own classrooms, they should be constantly referring to their specific students’ needs. This information will assist teachers in ensuring that they are prepared to address individual student’s learning needs and increase student proficiency. Once the lesson has been developed and teachers are ready to take it back and implement it in their classrooms, cluster leaders should make specific appointments for follow-up support and be assigned to bring back student work to the next cluster to assess the impact of the intervention. Again, the goal is to make certain that the best practice strategy is implemented in such a way that it remains a best practice that positively impacts student achievement.

The Cluster Observation Rubric: Quality of Content

The quality of the content presented during cluster is vital to the success of improving student achievement. Cluster leaders must choose content that is directly aligned to the school and cluster long range plan. They must also choose content which has been proven in the research, as well as in their field testing, to have a significant and positive impact on student achievement. When making cluster content decisions, cluster leaders must also know what programs/curriculum already exist in the school and how well they are being implemented. Trying to add strategies onto a weak curricular and instructional core can cause fragmented interventions with few results. This section asks cluster leaders to think deeply about how cluster learning fits into a larger continuum of learning within the school, and helps to ensure that what is being learned in cluster is high quality and will have a positive impact on student achievement.

Is Part of a Logical Clearly Defined Continuum of TEACHER Learning That Increases Student Learning:

Just as the sub-objectives in a lesson have to be logical, aligned, and presented in a logical order, so does the learning for a cluster. The cluster leader should use the school and long-
range plans and the cluster records to design the teacher learning so that it systematically accomplishes the goals. Each cluster should directly connect to the meetings preceding it and the ones following it. New teacher learning should build on what teachers have already learned and mastered and the needs of students represented by the members (Member Preparation/Participation). Through a continual analysis of student work by the cluster leader and members, the impact of the TEACHER learning on STUDENT learning can be evaluated.

It is important that the progression for what takes place in cluster is based on how the learning is impacting student achievement. This means that if the cluster leader had originally planned to move to a new segment of the strategy but the formative assessments indicates that students have not yet mastered the previous skill that is needed to scaffold new learning, the cluster would not move forward. Instead the focus would be on re-teaching the prior chunk of the strategy or emphasizing a specific component within it that teachers had not been implementing proficiently or making modifications based on student need. This same premise would hold true if formative assessments indicated that students had mastered the skill. Then the cluster may not need to continue working with the same strategy. The effective cluster leader assists cluster members to make those adjustments by continually connecting cluster learning to student needs to ensure a strong sense of purpose. (Leader as Facilitator).

**Is Documented With SIGNIFICANT Increases in Student Achievement:**

Before a strategy is presented in a cluster it must be field tested by master or mentor teachers. Thus the strategy was used in a classroom over a period of time and resulted in student achievement gains. In addition to identifying the critical attributes, (Leader as Presenter) the master or mentor teacher should continually assess the students and make modifications to the strategy as needed. This will give the cluster leader evidence to present to the cluster members about the effectiveness of the strategy and its possible modifications. The evidence should include examples of student work that have been analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively and demonstrates increases in student achievement. Therefore, the student work presented must include examples of work pre-strategy use and post strategy use so evidence for the impact of the strategy can be provided. Documented with significant increases in student achievement is different, though closely connected to relevant examples discussed in Leader as Presenter. The intent behind this section is to show how the strategy increased the student achievement for a group of students, while the relevant examples are more closely associated with how a critical attribute impacted a specific student’s performance.

The amount of growth needed to make it significant will depend on the school plan. If the master and mentor teachers are appropriately monitoring student work, they should be able to quantify how each child is progressing toward the cluster and school goals. If students are on track to meet or exceed the school goal, then the growth is significant.

Therefore significant increases in student achievement do not simply mean a certain percentage of students reaching proficiency or an increase in a class average. The significant aspect of the increase is that it increases performance for all sub-categories of students, moves students towards the school goal at an appropriate pace, and that this success is transferable to the end of year assessments.
The Cluster Observation Rubric: Cluster/Classroom Connection

There are two important parts to ensuring that the connection between cluster and teacher’s classrooms is efficient, appropriate and effective. The first is that the teachers leave cluster with a clear and immediate plan to implement and then measure the impact of the cluster learning. The second part is the follow-up that master and mentor teachers provide to each cluster member. Classroom follow-up by master and mentor teachers is essential because it ensures that weekly cluster learning is being effectively implemented in the classroom. It also indicates whether the master and mentor teachers are supporting career teachers’ progress in applying the new learning proficiently. The only interventions that will assure increased proficiency in students within the classroom are those that take place within the classroom.

There Is an Immediate and Proficient Application of Teacher Learning into the Classroom as a Result of What Takes Place During Cluster:

Cluster learning must be segmented so that new learning that will increase teacher instructional proficiency to address a specific student need is ready to be effectively and appropriately implemented in the classroom from each cluster meeting (e.g. immediate and proficient application). The ability of cluster members to immediately and proficiently apply cluster learning will also depend on the degree to which the cluster leader effectively modeled the new learning. As previously stated, (Leader as Presenter) the modeling should include clear explanations of the strategy’s critical attributes with documented evidence of its positive impact on student achievement from the leader’s field testing. Members must also have sufficient time to develop the new learning with support from master and mentor teachers during each cluster meeting. (Leader as Facilitator and Member Participation/Preparation) These elements are essential to enable cluster members to immediately and effectively apply the new learning in their classrooms.

Specific Master/Mentor Classroom Follow-up Is Planned to Ensure All Members Effectively Transfer New Learning for Their Students in the Classroom:

Master and mentor teachers must not only be concerned that the new learning is being implemented in the classroom, but also, and more importantly, they must be assured that the new learning is being implemented appropriately and effectively. This level of application increases the likelihood of increased student achievement and the cluster members’ agility when transferring the new learning to different teaching situations. For different cluster members, master and mentor teachers will need to provide different levels of support. The level of support needed by each cluster member should be a result of the cluster leader’s informal assessment of members during the cluster, specifically during development time. To determine effective support for each cluster member, the cluster leader must assess where each member is with his/her understanding and ability to effectively implement the new learning in the classroom so that it has a positive impact on student achievement. Therefore, effective master/mentor follow-up is more than just having cluster members sign up for the support they want. By assessing cluster members during the meeting, cluster leaders should be able to identify which members may need demonstration lessons, team teaching or observations.
This continuum demonstrates how career teacher development in becoming independent using a new instructional practice is supported by the mentor/master teachers. As a part of each cluster meeting, the leader should plan specific follow-up support with each teacher in their classroom to ensure that the new learning is accurately applied. This should include the date, time and level of support that will be provided. Below are explanations for each of these follow-up types:

**Modeling/Demonstration Teaching**

The cluster leader teaches a lesson while the career teacher observes. Demonstration teaching episodes can last an entire lesson, be a specific part of a lesson, or involve a group of students within the classroom.

- The purpose of the demonstration/modeling should be clear to the career teacher.
- Instructional strategies developed in cluster supported by specific rubric indicator(s) are targeted. The cluster leader provides an “exemplary” demonstration of the targeted area while the mentee records and reflects.
- After the lesson is modeled, the cluster leader and career teacher discuss what the career teacher will apply next based on the teacher’s understanding of the modeling and the impact of the lesson on student achievement.

**Team Teaching**

The cluster leader co-teaches with the career teacher.

- While not as directive as having the cluster leader demonstrate the lesson, team teaching is an excellent way to address student needs and to provide some support for the career teacher to experiment with new skills and strategies.
- Example: The career teacher is applying a new instructional skill strategy of using a thinking map to assist students in comparing/contrasting so that they can better comprehend science information as evidenced by increased student achievement (students performing at the highest level will remain there) on both the benchmark test and teacher made content tests. At the same time, the career teacher’s area of refinement from her observation is questioning. Therefore, as the career teacher and cluster leader teach together, both are using the thinking map and overlaying high quality questions and noting student responses, which they will use as the basis for debrief later.
Peer Observation with Feedback

The cluster leader observes the career teacher while teaching and then provides feedback. Such coaching can take place outside the evaluation process or within it.

- The most important aspect of this follow-up is to provide specific and productive feedback to the career teacher as new learning is being developed and applied in the classroom with students.
- This feedback should lead to increased instructional proficiency and increased student learning.

Scenarios Helping to Define Cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster Group Scenarios</th>
<th>GOAL: Increase each member’s teaching proficiency in order to increase student performance.</th>
<th>Which scenario is a true cluster and will best meet the goal of increasing student achievement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario A</strong></td>
<td>General Description: Administration (building or district) has some information that they need to disseminate. The meeting time is used to discuss a management decision (i.e., schedule the special teachers for Title I reading, talk about when pull-outs can be scheduled, define the building philosophy for second language learners or talk about how parent night will be organized). Possible activities include: - Discussion around schedules - Discussion around &quot;switching kids&quot; for grouping based on schedule needs (i.e., pull-outs) - Discussion about school management issues Possible topics</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario B</strong></td>
<td>General Description: A group of teachers know they want to teach a topic (i.e., Colorado History) next month. They decide to use meeting time to outline what major topics will be covered during the unit (i.e., Native Americans, Fur Traders, Miners, etc.) and list the Standards covered in the unit. They create an outline of the unit including materials needed, resources, books, guest speakers, major activities, and how they will assess and when they will assess. Possible activities include: - Curriculum Mapping - Plan for what to teach, who to teach, and when - Schedule trading groups between classes in order to allow teachers to teach topics of strengths or interests - Planning for student Possible topics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario C</strong></td>
<td>General Description: A group of teachers agree on an instructional strategy or program they are interested in learning more about (i.e., Guided Reading or Spelling Program). They decide to use meeting time to learn more about that instructional strategy by sharing professional readings, inviting a specialist to visit cluster with expertise to share, view a video about that instructional strategy, and talk about how they can implement that strategy in their own classrooms. Possible activities include: - Invite a Specialist to share expertise (Literacy or Math Coach, ESL/SLA expert). - View an instructional video and discuss instructional practices related to the evaluation rubric (i.e., &quot;Instructional Best Practices&quot;) Possible topics</td>
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<td><strong>Scenario D</strong></td>
<td>General Description: A group of teachers determine an area of student need (i.e., identifying and using relevant details) that will be their focus for cluster work aligned with the school plan. They use meeting time to identify what students are expected to know and be able to do and to learn specific instructional strategies necessary for helping students grow in that area of need (i.e., reading and writing strategies for identifying and using relevant details to make their reading/writing more interesting). They develop each strategy and use it with master and mentor teachers observing and modeling in classrooms. They return each week with student work as a basis for discussing how each strategy is working. Possible activities include: - Invite Specialist to share expertise in specific area of need for instructional Possible topics</td>
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addressed: Any scheduling or management issue

Orientation of This Meeting: School or district level management

Major Guard Against: Tendency is to remain at the management/organizational level (i.e., staff meetings) without moving to the level with a direct effect on student achievement and instructional improvement.

Suggestion: Schedule additional staff meetings to take care of school management and organizational issues, and reserve cluster time for learning about improved instruction and student achievement.

- Share professional readings
- Guided Reading or Guided Math
- ESL/SLA Strategies or Sheltered English
- Differentiated Instruction
- Using Technology

Orientation of this Staff Development Meeting: Teaching Strategies & Best Practices

Major Guard Against: Tendency may be to remain in the theoretical (content knowledge of the research about the strategy) without moving to application level (examining student performance, developing and applying the strategy to classroom).

Suggestion: Look to the students and how the instructional strategies are actually working in a measurable way to improve student performance. Work for direct application of cluster activities to the classroom application level.

- Discuss Professional Readings as they relate to specific area of need for improved student or teacher performance.
- Other activities with direct application to the student level
- Develop the strategy one part at a time for implementation in their classrooms

Focus: Staff Meeting
Focus: Plan Time
Focus: Staff Development
Focus: Student Performance through Ongoing Applied practice with specific students (Literacy/Math Coach, ESL/SLA expert).

Possible topics addressed:
- Guided Reading or Guided Math
- ESL/SLA Strategies or Sheltered English
- Differentiated Instruction
- Using Technology

Orientation of this Meeting: Staff Development Meeting

Suggestion: Continue to look to the students and what is working or not working in a measurable way to improve student achievement. Continue to work for a direct application of cluster activities to the classroom application level.
**THIS IS NOT CLUSTER WORK!**

This is not cluster work because it is not about increasing the teachers’ teaching capacity in order to improve student achievement. While these activities must be a part of school operations, and have merit, they should not be carried out during cluster time.

Ask yourself, “Did we have to do these things before TAP?” If the answer is yes, then continue to handle these matters in the same way that you did before you had cluster time.

**THIS IS NOT APPROPRIATE USE OF CLUSTER TIME.**

Curriculum mapping is not an appropriate use of cluster time.

Schools and teachers should have been curriculum mapping before TAP, and they should continue. Curriculum mapping should occur during planning time and departmental/grade level meetings.

If a teacher is struggling with curriculum mapping, the master or mentor teacher should work one-on-one with that teacher. If the problem is broader, the master or mentor teacher should work with the department/grade level chair in order to plan how this can be addressed during departmental/grade level meetings.

**THIS IS STAFF DEVELOPMENT, but not yet Ongoing Applied Professional Development**

This scenario reflects teacher learning in a focused and specific manner tied directly to the school plan. Teachers should continue to develop the new learning for the classroom and apply it, bringing student work back to inform future work.

This scenario reflects some of the STEPS for Effective Learning. Teachers identified a problem based on student need that was tied directly to the school plan. They spent time learning strategies that directly align to the student need. They may also develop and apply those strategies; HOWEVER, the development is not at the application level, so the application is not yet clear or specific. Also, the master and mentor teacher follow-up is not clear. In the scenario, there is no mention of using student data to inform decisions or to monitor increases in student performance.

**THIS IS QUALITY WORK FOR CLUSTER TIME.**

Elements of Ongoing Applied Professional Growth evident in this scenario:

1. Segmenting and sequencing of new learning
2. Direct application in the classroom
3. The support of master/mentor teachers to ensure accurate application to student learning

Of the scenarios above, this is the strongest. It applies all of the STEPS for Effective Learning. Teachers identified a problem based on student need that was tied directly to the school plan. They learned new strategies directly aligned to the student need, developed the strategies and applied them to the classroom with master and mentor teacher follow-up in the classroom. As part of the development and application, they continually relied on student work to inform decisions and monitor growth. Throughout the entire process they evaluated the impact on student achievement levels with the assumptions that at the end of the implementation of the plan, there will be a more formalized evaluation of the student results.
The Individual Growth Plan

Introduction:

Throughout this handbook we have been discussing how to utilize the different organizational resources (school plan, cluster long-range plan, cluster meeting record) to identify a more focused and manageable student need and create a plan to address it. The purpose of this plan is to increase the likelihood that teachers are implementing specific and effective classroom interventions and that they can directly link changes in student achievement to those interventions for increased student achievement. The teacher’s individual growth plan (IGP) is the TAP organizational resource most narrowed and focused upon the specific students in a teacher’s classroom. Through development of an IGP, teachers have the opportunity to identify both their individual students’ needs in the context of the larger school plan and their individual instructional needs based on the TAP Instructional Rubric. Teachers are then aided in this process by master and/or mentor teachers who provide frequent classroom-based follow-up support.

There are two primary ways that the IGP can be used. The first is to personalize the cluster process as aligned to specific student and teacher needs. The second is to work on areas aligned to the school plan but not necessarily specific to the current cluster cycle. The key is to address the most pressing student need (which will most often be the same as the cluster goal) and couple it with the teacher’s instructional need. Therefore, everyone in a cluster might have the same student academic focus in their IGP, but a different focus for the teacher need. The activities and support may also be differentiated based on that teacher and the needs of his/her specific students. It is also possible that everyone in a cluster may NOT have the same student academic focus for their IGP. For example, a cluster may be focused on improving students’ abilities to make inferences. Although this is a need in all cluster members’ classrooms, the assessment data used may show that students in one teacher’s classroom have a greater need in identifying main idea. In this case, the teacher would be implementing strategies focused on making inferences as he/she learns and develops them during cluster while also working, with the support of the master and mentor teacher, to develop and implement strategies to improve students’ abilities to identify main idea.

The IGP is a record-keeping document and log to support teachers in their own professional growth and to ensure that growth in classroom practice is clearly connected to measurable increases in student achievement. The IGP should assist teachers in this “action research” where they are directly tying teacher practices in the classroom to incremental changes in student achievement in a focused academic area of student need.
Like the other TAP processes, individual growth plans are most effective when they include a specific application of the STEPS for Effective Learning. The rubric for the IGP (see below) is designed to be aligned to the STEPS and will be used in this section as a framework to highlight the critical elements of a successful IGP. Additionally we have included the critical elements of a high quality IGP and these points will be referenced on the following pages.

**Individual Growth Plan (IGP):**

- Includes teachers’ individual goal written in terms of student achievement and aligned to school and cluster goal with a supporting area from the TAP Instructional Rubric
- References pre-test data for students’ identified need as well as the teacher’s score for area of identified need (area of refinement) from the TAP Instructional Rubric that supports the IGP goal
- References specific strategies (activities) aligned to the students’ identified need the teacher implements in the classroom and how implementation is supported by Master or Mentor teacher
- References how the teacher continually monitors student achievement following each implementation (evidence of implementation)
- References post-test data for students and the teacher’s score in the area of refinement

Individual Growth Plan is for a specific period of time in which the teacher is focused on improving student achievement in a specific area (main idea) as opposed to a plan that expands the school year.
## Individual Growth Plan Case Study Rubric

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<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IGP process includes identified activities within cluster and classroom using all of the STEPS for Effective Learning and includes the following:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>IGP process includes identified activities within cluster and classroom using some or few of the STEPS for Effective Learning or includes the following:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step One: Identified need is:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Step One: Identified need is:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Step One: Identified need is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Clearly based on specific student data by <strong>sub-group and sub-objectives</strong> as defined by the cluster and school plans, with <strong>links to instructional rubric</strong></td>
<td>- Based on specific student data as defined by the cluster and the school plans <strong>with links to instructional rubric</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher competency area/goal:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is measurable in terms of specific student outcomes and <strong>teacher outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is clearly defined with <strong>links to benchmark and pre/post assessment instruments</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Leads to specific classroom applications focused on identified student need</td>
<td>- Teacher competency area/goal:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>- Teacher competency area/goal:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Is not measurable</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Is poorly defined</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Does not lead to specific classroom applications</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step Two: New learning:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Comes from credible sources and is explicitly connected to student learning need and <strong>teacher refinement area</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Segmented and sequenced appropriately for clear and accurate classroom application focused on improving teacher/student proficiency in the identified area</strong></td>
<td>- Comes from credible sources and is connected to student and teacher learning need.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Segmented and sequenced appropriately for clear and accurate classroom application</strong></td>
<td>- <strong>Segmented and sequenced appropriately for clear and accurate classroom application</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step Three: New learning is developed with:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Step Three: New learning is developed with:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Step Three: New learning is developed with:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- With systematic assistance from master and mentor teachers, the teacher follows a learning continuum where he/she observes an exemplary demonstration of a skill, is coached, observed, and assisted to assure effective implementation with his or her</td>
<td>- Master/Mentor teacher demonstrating/team teaching, and/or assisting with planning the new skill in the classroom.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Language from the instructional rubric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Formative assessment to inform instructional decision-</td>
<td>- Language from the instructional rubric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>Development of learning to fit classroom is arbitrary, fragmented, or unclear.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The IGP does <strong>not</strong> include Master/Mentor teacher demonstrating/team teaching the new skill in the classroom or assistance may not unrelated to student need.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>students.</td>
<td>making</td>
<td>• May remain focused on teacher behavior with only little or general consideration given to impact on student performance.</td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Measures, language and feedback from the instructional rubric</strong> &lt;br&gt;• <strong>Frequent formative assessment used to monitor/ adjust interventions</strong></td>
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</table>

**Step Four: Effective application of new learning is assured through:**

- **Continual** monitoring of student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective.
- **Monitoring of student work is focused on moving each student to proficiency**

**Step Four: Effective application of new learning is developed through:**

- Monitoring of student work to determine whether intervention is effective with **focus on moving all students to proficiency**

**Step Four:**

- Teacher does not apply new learning in classroom or does **not** monitor student work to determine whether intervention is effective.
- **Focus is only on the teacher area of need with limited consideration given to the impact on identified student need**

**Step Five: Evaluation clearly demonstrates:**

- **Alignment with pre-test, and intervention**
- **Timely and appropriate application**
- Teacher analysis of data results in terms of individual student performance
- **Results from teacher learning** are measurable in terms of student achievement and teacher growth.
- Increased proficiency for **all students, or clear plans to achieve this**

**Step Five: Evaluation clearly demonstrates:**

- **Alignment with pre-test, and intervention**
- **Timely and appropriate application**
- **Results from teacher learning** is measurable in terms of student achievement
- **Increased proficiency for most students, or clear plans to achieve this**

**Step Five:** Evaluate

- There is no evidence of student achievement.
- **Evaluation is not planned or considers only teacher area of need**
- Reference to evaluation of student performance may be given to the annual test or other assessment not administered in a timely manner

---

*Note: The goal needs to be set from the school/cluster plan, but the method of getting to that goal (teacher process) can be informed by the rubric.*
Ultimately, the ownership and responsibility of developing a plan for individual growth with the support of mentor and master teachers belongs to every teacher within a TAP school. This includes master and mentor teachers who should support each other in the development of their IGPs. In Leadership Team meetings, this support comes in the form of reviewing field test data to ensure the effectiveness of the strategy, identifying the appropriate segmenting/sequencing of the strategy and assisting one another in identifying its’ critical attributes before it is disseminated in cluster (See Section 1 on the Leadership Team).

Mentor and master teachers are responsible for training teachers within their school using the STEPS for Effective Learning in the process of developing effective IGPs. This will ultimately result in documented increases in student performance through improved instructional practice. The development of an IGP is a collaborative process among the master teacher, the mentor teacher and the career teacher. While there is flexibility about where to focus the IGP as determined by student data and teacher evaluation results, the ultimate choice should be where the most impact for improved instructional practice and student achievement can be felt.

**Pre-Test Data – Identifying the Need/Rationale**

**Critical Element:**

References pre-test data for students’ identified need as well as the teacher’s score for area of identified need (area of refinement) from the TAP Instructional Rubric that supports the IGP goal.

**From the Individual Growth Plan Case Study Rubric:**

**Step One: Identified need is:**

- Clearly based on specific student data by sub-group and sub-objectives as defined by the cluster and school plans, with links to instructional rubric*
- Teacher competency area/goal:
  - Is measurable in terms of specific student outcomes and teacher outcomes
  - Is clearly defined with links to benchmark and pre/post assessment instruments
  - Leads to specific classroom applications focused on identified student need

All individual growth plans start with a well-defined and specific student need aligned with the school/cluster plan. Therefore, the rationale or evidence used to determine the student need for an IGP must stem from student data from a teacher’s specific class of students. Specifically, teachers should utilize the data that most closely relates to daily classroom instruction, such as pre/post assessments and specific and timely benchmark data, as the means of defining the direction of their work.

Most of the time IGP goals will mirror the cluster goal, since the cluster goal should also be chosen based on an academic area of great student need evidenced by data. Therefore, the
academic focus may be the same for all cluster members. However, the student data for each teacher’s classroom and the teacher’s instructional refinement area from the TAP Instructional Rubric will differ. Therefore, the type of activities and support will be differentiated for teachers.

**Note:** While the goal of an IGP is to improve teacher instruction in order to improve student academic achievement, the teacher need should never be the primary source for the goal. The focus has to remain on the student academic need and the changes in their achievement in that area of need. For example, if a teacher is having difficulty in lesson planning (Designing and Planning Instruction) it is most likely affecting student achievement as lessons are not focused or purposeful. However, by focusing exclusively on lesson planning, the impact on student achievement would be diffused and/or disconnected to the school goals. Moreover, it would be difficult for the teacher to be able to identify what aspect of his/her instruction was truly creating the change in student proficiency. Therefore, by focusing on a specific student need and implementing strategies aligned to that need in conjunction with the teacher need, the teacher will be able to see the direct impact of his/her actions and increase student achievement in a direct and purposeful way.

**Sample Individual Growth Plan**

**Teacher Name:** Tru Believer  
**Assigned Master Teacher:** Shirley Best
**Signature:**  
**Assigned Mentor Teacher:** Moe  
**Support Date:**  
**Signature of M/M:**

**School Goal:** Based on 2004 – 2005 state test results:

*By May 2005, 70% of 7th and 8th grade students will Score BASIC or above on the ELA and Math portions of the state test; 35% will score PROFICIENT or ADVANCED which is aligned to AYP. All students will increase their scores by at least 105 scale score points which represents a year’s growth and 1/2 of another proficiency level.*

**Cluster Goal:**

*By April 21, 2005, all students will increase scores by 10% (one proficiency level) on a teacher-made assessment aligned to the state English Language Arts test, and students already scoring at the highest level will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching inference strategies with an emphasis on the use of visuals and modeling as referenced on the TAP Instructional Rubric under Presenting Instructional.*

**Individual Goal:**

*All students will improve their scores by 10% (one proficiency level) in making inferences on a teacher-made assessment aligned with the state ELA test. The teacher will increase her proficiency in teaching inferences by incorporating the use of graphic organizers supported by grouping to improve students’ abilities to make inferences. The teacher's score in grouping as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric will improve to 3.*
Identified Need/Rationale:

- State test indicates that 27% of 8th graders are Below Basic on the ELA portion of the state test.
- Benchmark data indicated that students’ area of need in reading comprehension is inferential comprehension. Benchmark data indicated that 80% of the teacher’s students had difficulty in the area of inferential comprehension.
- Teacher’s pretest indicated that making inferences was the specific area of weakness under inferential comprehension.
- Based on the pretest, 23 out of 28 students were unable to make proficient inferences.
- Teacher’s score in grouping as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric was 1.

Defining the Individual Goal

Critical Elements of Individual Growth Plan Goals:

- Goal is aligned to cluster goal and school goal.
- Goal is based on needs of individual teacher’s students.
- Goal is based on identified area of teacher need from TAP Instructional Rubric.
- Goal for students and teacher is measurable.

The foundation for the individual goal comes from a need/rationale based primarily on student needs. The goal itself is where the teacher identifies what he or she will do to address his/her specific students’ needs and what the intended outcome of this work will be. *The goal should be written in measurable terms of the students’ growth, not by using averages.* Instead, it should include how many students at each level will increase or maintain their proficiency. Averages can give misleading data as they can disguise great variance in proficiency within a classroom. Only by looking at individual student growth can a teacher truly assess where his or her students are and how best to assist their progress.

Using language from the instructional rubric, the goal should also be written to include the new learning the teacher will obtain to address this student need and how much growth is expected for the teacher as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric. This allows for a direct relationship between teacher behavior and student performance built by quantifying the effectiveness of the strategy in terms of student growth. Schools in their first year of implementing TAP should not require career teachers to write IGPs. Instead, the leadership team members should practice writing and monitoring their own IGPs in order to be able to better assist career teachers in writing their own IGPs in year 2. These IGPs should focus on the required field testing by the master and mentor teachers.

It is important to note that although the measure referenced in the goal should be an assessment at the end of the teacher’s/students’ learning cycle, the teacher should also be monitoring student growth with ongoing formative assessments as he/she implements the new strategies. Again, averages are not an effective means of quantifying student data, rather shifting levels of student proficiency should be the measure used. This should include how many students at each level increased their proficiency, how many remained the same and if any declined in performance. This provides the teacher with a compass to determine both how students are progressing towards the goal and if/what changes need to be made to the strategy to better address the students’ needs. Along with documentation of student
progress, the teacher’s progress towards meeting his/her goal in the identified area of refinement should also be documented.

**Developing Appropriate Activities**

**Critical Element:**

References specific strategies (activities) aligned to the students’ identified need the teacher implements in the classroom and how implementation is supported by Master or Mentor teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From the Individual Growth Plan Case Study Rubric:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step Two:</strong> <strong>New learning:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comes from credible sources and is explicitly connected to student learning need and teacher refinement area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Monitoring of student work is focused on moving each student to proficiency</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The guidelines for quality work for cluster groups are also applicable to the work used by teachers to attain individual goals:

**Guidelines***:

**Effective activities should be:**

• Aligned to the identified goal.
• Based on a specific student need and focused on teacher learning that impacts student learning.
• Based on the teacher’s area of need as measured by the TAP instructional rubric.
From credible research based sources (evidence of proven application showing student growth) and field tested by a master or mentor teacher.

Consistently monitored to ensure quality transfer of the new learning through classroom support by master and mentor teachers and ongoing analysis of formative assessments.

Classroom Support:

To ensure the quality transfer of a teacher’s new learning to the classroom, it is necessary for the master/mentor to provide support in the classroom. More specifically, in the process of developing new learning, a teacher follows a learning continuum where the master/mentor teacher provides the opportunity for the teacher to observe an exemplary demonstration and be coached, observed and assisted to assure effective implementation of the new learning with his/her students. During this process, the teacher should also be receiving support in his/her area of refinement as identified in observations and evaluations.

Monitoring Student Work:

Critical Element

References how the teacher continually monitors student achievement following each implementation (evidence of implementation)

Another way to ensure that the new learning is being appropriately implemented in the classroom is by continually referencing student work. By analyzing ongoing informal and formal formative assessments that are aligned to the benchmark and high stakes test and utilizing the data, the teacher can determine the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of student growth. The focus of these assessments should be narrow enough to give teachers specific information about whether student learning is being appropriately scaffold. Clear, state assessment aligned criteria for what is being assessed in the student work is another essential component towards making the data meaningful to teachers and an effective tool in guiding instructional decision making. This data should not be in the form of averages, but in terms of growth in student proficiency levels. This should include how many students at each level increased their proficiency, how many remained the same and if any declined in performance. Using this information the teacher can make informed instructional decisions about what further interventions the students may need. Additionally, the teacher will be able to competently predict students’ performance on reaching the targeted goal on the benchmark/state exam.
Follow-Up/Evidence Activities

Critical Element:

References how the teacher continually monitors student achievement following each implementation (evidence of implementation).

The primary purpose of the Follow-up/Evidence section is to draw the direct links/connections between the interventions that the teacher has implemented and the changes in student achievement. This section also documents changes to the strategy or interventions for specific students based on the results from implementing the strategy or portion of the strategy.

The TAP individual growth plan differs from most professional growth plans that teachers have experienced because it is an ongoing joint effort between the teacher and the mentor/master teacher. In the traditional model, the professional growth plan is often created at the beginning of the school year and then not revisited until the end. Unlike the traditional model, the TAP individual growth plan is continuously monitored and adjusted as new learning is obtained and implemented, its impact on student achievement is cited, and goals are realigned. The mentor and master teacher must work closely with the mentee to assure that growth is occurring toward the individual goals. To ensure this growth, besides regularly assessing students through formal and informal formative assessments, it is necessary to have a review of the individual plan with the teacher on a regular basis. How often this is done depends on the needs of the teacher and the student results. Novice or struggling teachers should have this review at least every two weeks. The more experienced or confident teachers may be fine with one review a month. It is best to agree on this review cycle with the teacher and to set it into both your calendars right from the beginning. IGPS will usually last as long as the cluster cycle with the new cycle goals aligning with teacher IGP goals. In these cases, the cluster’s post assessment can also serve as the IGP’s summative data; however, there are always exceptions. For example, a teacher may choose to extend the IGP past the cluster cycle to work with a small group of students who did not reach proficiency during the cycle. Alternatively, if the teacher was focusing on a goal that was different than the cluster, her/his IGP may have a different time frame. The key to selecting the length of the IGP cycle is the same as when determining its goal. Student data should be the driving force for instructional decisions. Therefore, teachers should decide to either continue or move on to a new focus based on student achievement data.

Evaluating the Impact

From the Individual Growth Plan Case Study Rubric:

**Step Five: Evaluation clearly demonstrates:**

- **Alignment with pre-test, and intervention**
- **Timely and appropriate application**
- Teacher analysis of data results in terms of individual student performance
- **Results** from teacher learning is measurable in terms of student achievement and teacher growth.
- Increased proficiency for all students, or clear plans to achieve this
It is important to assess the impact of the new learning and activities throughout the implementation of the IGP in order to determine the effectiveness before the post-assessment. If student work is effectively assessed throughout the process and the measures are aligned to the pre- and post-tests, the teachers should be able to accurately predict how students will perform on the post-assessment and how the teacher will perform in the targeted area from the TAP Instructional Rubrics. The documentation that would be exemplary for step five includes each of the elements listed in the above box.

**Tips for Effective Individual Growth Plan Reviews**

1) Master/mentor and career teachers should come prepared to review individual growth plans during every post-conference and each month during a segment of a cluster meeting. Preparation includes selecting and analyzing samples of student work to show the impact of the new learning.

2) Meetings need not be long to be effective if both the master/mentor and teacher come prepared.

3) Each should have a copy of the plan.

4) The master/mentor should be familiar with the teacher’s goal and planned activities.

5) The teacher should bring outcomes/evidence of what has been completed, as well as questions, concerns, or requests for help from the master or mentor. He/she should have these in writing to ensure they are not inadvertently overlooked.

6) Suggestions and ideas from the master/mentor should be written out during the review to ensure that a suggestion or modification is not overlooked later.

7) The master/mentor should initial or make notes on the plan to show what areas have been completed, discussed, or revised. Both should have copies at the end of the meeting.

8) The master/mentor and career teacher should then ask themselves, “What comes next? Continuation of current goal – or a new goal?”

**Changing or Redirecting the Individual Growth Plan**

If the individual plan is being executed appropriately, there will be a continual analysis of student work which will eventually provide evidence that students have reached the level of attainment set by the academic portion of the IGP goal and a new goal is needed.

However, if there is a problem in the goal’s execution or if the interventions are not appropriate, students may not make the necessary gains. Thus a redirection of the teacher work is needed.

If it is the goal itself that needs redirection, the teacher, working with master/mentor, will begin the process of defining a new goal by looking at what needs to be done to support the school goal, using student data as the primary source for making the decision.

If it is decided that the interventions are what need redirection, the master/mentor teacher may need to look to providing more direct support or a more specific intervention that will support the teacher to build expertise and realize student success. Benchmark assessments, teacher-made assessments and examination of student work will provide the basis for identifying the information for a more specific intervention to be developed.
Finally, in some cases the issue may be the assessments themselves. If the assessments are improperly aligned to the goal or do not provide the information necessary from which to make high quality instructional decisions students make not be progressing as needed. If the assessments are the problem, then the team will need to work together to identify what specific skill the team is trying to measure, and develop clear criteria aligned to the state assessments with which to analyze the student work.

To do this the career teacher and master and or mentor will again reference the school and cluster plan and obtain pertinent student data through a benchmark exam or teacher made assessment.

The next pages contain two examples of individual growth plans and the corresponding scores.

**Example of Individual Growth Plan for a middle school social studies teacher:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Goal: Based on 2004 – 2005 state test results:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By May 2005, 70% of 7th and 8th grade students will Score BASIC or above on the ELA and Math portions of the state test; 35% will score PROFICIENT or ADVANCED which is aligned to AYP. All students will increase their scores by at least 105 scale score points which represents a year’s growth and 1/2 of another proficiency level.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster Goal:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By May 2005, all students will increase scores by 10%, which is one performance level, on a teacher-made assessment aligned to the state ELA test, and students already scoring at the highest level will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching inference strategies with an emphasis on the use of visuals and modeling as referenced on the TAP Instructional Rubric under Presenting Instructional.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Goal:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By May 2005, all students will improve their scores by 10%, which is one performance level, in making inferences on a teacher-made assessment aligned with the state ELA test. The teacher will increase her proficiency in teaching inferences by incorporating the use of graphic organizers supported by grouping to improve students’ abilities to make inferences. The teacher’s score in grouping as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric will improve to 3.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified Need/Rationale:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• State test indicates that 27% of 8th graders are Below Basic on the ELA portion of the state test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Benchmark data indicated that students’ area of need in reading comprehension is inferential comprehension. Benchmark data indicated that 80% of the teacher’s students had difficulty in the area of inferential comprehension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher’s pretest indicated that making inferences was the specific area of weakness under inferential comprehension.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Based on the pretest, 23 out of 28 students were unable to make proficient inferences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher’s score in grouping as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric was 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity/Classroom Outcome:</td>
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<tr>
<td>03.28.05 Administer teacher-made pretest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>04.06.05 Read section from Kylene Beers’ book, <em>When Kids Can’t Read</em>, for the purpose of identifying difficulties students experience in making inferences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>04.13.05 Master and mentor modeled “It Says, I Say” strategy in cluster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.18.05 Conferenced with master teacher to identify modifications to strategy to improve students’ abilities to make connections to text</td>
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<tr>
<td>04.20.05 Master modeled modifications to strategy to improve students’ abilities to make self to text connections for “I Say” portion.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
04.27.05 Master modeled “Syntax Surgery” strategy in cluster.

05.04.05 Administered post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 out of 28 students - 100%</td>
<td>4 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 out of 28 students - 90%</td>
<td>3 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 out of 28 students - 80%</td>
<td>2 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 out of 28 students below 70%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher implemented modifications with mentor observing and assisting with small groups of students. Planned grouping of students with Mentor teacher to ensure groups were varied and each student knew their responsibility and the teacher’s expectations. Teacher placed students in groups to share their connections and to explain how these connections improved their ability to make strong inferences.

Data from implementation of modifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 out of 28 students - 100%</td>
<td>4 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 out of 28 students - 90%</td>
<td>3 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 out of 28 students - 80%</td>
<td>2 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 out of 28 students below 70%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Master demonstrated strategy in teacher’s classroom and modeled use of grouping with teacher observing and assisting small groups.

Data from post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 out of 28 students - 100%</td>
<td>4 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 out of 28 students - 90%</td>
<td>3 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 out of 28 students - 80%</td>
<td>2 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 out of 28 students below 70%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 out of 28 (82 %) students were able to make strong inferences. Remaining 5 students are receiving remediation by teacher and mentor. Teacher’s score in grouping as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric improved to a 3.
### Impact of Strategy on Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test the Same</th>
<th>#Increased Scores</th>
<th>#Decreased Scores</th>
<th># Score Stayed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scores for middle school social studies teacher’s Individual Growth Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>IGP process includes identified activities within cluster and classroom using all of the STEPS for Effective Learning and includes the following:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Step One: Identify the Need
- Rationale clearly based on specific student data as defined by the cluster and school plans, with links to instructional rubric*
  - Teacher competency area/goal:
    - Is measurable in terms of specific student outcomes and **teacher outcomes**
    - Is clearly defined
    - Leads to specific classroom applications
  - Rationale for IGP began with student data from high stakes test then was further identified though analysis of benchmark data. Specific student need in inferencing was then identified through teacher made pre-test aligned to the high stakes test. The goal is measurable and includes growth for all students. IGP is clearly aligned to the school and cluster goal. Teacher’s area of need is directly linked to the instructional rubric in the area of grouping and is measurable. Since goal is specific in terms of student and teacher need, it does lead to specific classroom application.

| 5     | New learning comes from a credible source, Kylene Beers. Evidence is provided for how the new learning is having a positive impact on student achievement in the area of identified need, inferencing, in the teacher’s classroom. All new learning obtained by the teacher is directly connected to inferencing or the teacher’s area of need in grouping. |

#### Step Two: Obtain
- New learning comes from credible sources (evidence of proven application showing student growth) and is explicitly connected to student learning need.

| 5     | New learning comes from a credible source, Kylene Beers. Evidence is provided for how the new learning is having a positive impact on student achievement in the area of identified need, inferencing, in the teacher’s classroom. All new learning obtained by the teacher is directly connected to inferencing or the teacher’s area of need in grouping. |

#### Step Three: Develop
- With systematic assistance from master and mentor teachers, the teacher follows a learning continuum where he/she observes an exemplary demonstration of a skill, is coached, observed, and assisted to assure effective implementation with his or her students.

| 5     | M/M provided support though modeling of new learning in cluster, support in analysis of student data, demonstration lessons in the classroom, team teaching, and support in planning grouping activities. Evidence is provided that M/M continually provided feedback to the teacher after observations and assisted in the development of modification based on student need. |
### Step Four: Apply
- Teacher applies new learning in classroom while **continually** monitoring student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective.

| 5 | Evidence is provided for how each intervention of new learning impacted students’ abilities to make inferences. Data was used to develop modifications as needed to continue support students not mastering skill. |

### Step Five: Evaluate
- Evidence of and results from teacher activities are measurable in terms of student achievement and teacher growth.

| 5 | Evidence is provided that the new learning had a positive impact on students’ abilities to make inferences. Post-test is aligned to the high stakes test and data is recorded to show individual student growth as opposed to just percentages of students. Teacher’s growth in the area of grouping is also provided. Therefore, evidence is provided for how interventions impacted student growth and teacher growth. |

*Note: The goal needs to be set from the school/cluster plan, but the method of getting to that goal (teacher process) can be informed by the rubric.*

---

**Example of Individual Growth Plan for a master teacher:**

---

Page 116
School Goal:
School Goal: Based on 2005 – 2006 state test results:
Grade 4 students will increase  Grade 5 students will increase: Grade 6 students will increase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4% Advanced</td>
<td>40% Advanced</td>
<td>0% Advanced</td>
<td>40% Advanced</td>
<td>1% Advanced</td>
<td>40% Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**36% Proficient**

| 36% Basic | 46% Basic | 45% Basic | 42% Basic | 44% Basic | 35% Basic |

**27% Proficient**

| 24% Below Basic | 14% Below Basic | 28% Below Basic | 18% Below Basic | 40% Below Basic | 25% Below Basic |

**15% Proficient**

All students will increase their scores by 8-12 scaled points. All students will increase their scores 105-scale score points. 100 points represent a year’s growth and 5 points represents one half of another proficiency level.

Yearly Cluster Goal:

By May 2006, all students will improve performance on the MAP assessment by at least reaching his/her predicted target RIT growth established by NWEA, and students performing at the highest level will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching reading comprehension and writing strategies. **Based on each student’s scores on the first MAP benchmark, NWEA identifies a target growth score for each student to reach by the end of the year. NWEA MAP RIT scores are correlated to performance on the state test.**

Cluster Cycle Goal:

By the end of the cycle, all students will increase their scores to 70% accuracy, students scoring at this level would increase their score by 1 to 2 proficiency points, which is the same as 10% to 20%, and students performing at the highest level will maintain their scores on the teacher made pre-to post reading assessment, which was developed using state test-release items, due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching students using strategies that focus on monitoring comprehension and questioning in order to identify main idea and supporting details.

Individual Goal:

By November 2005, all students will improve their scores to at least 70% in analysis of text through identification of main idea and supporting details. Students scoring at this level would increase their score by 1 to 2 proficiency points, which is the same as 10% to 20%, and students performing at the highest level will maintain their scores on the teacher made test. Pre- and Post-tests are aligned with the state ELA test. The teacher will increase her proficiency in teaching analysis of text by incorporating the use of pacing that is appropriate and brisk and provides opportunities for all learning rates and a strong closure supported by Lesson Structure and Pacing. The teacher’s score in Lesson Structure and Pacing as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric will improve from a 3 to a 4.
Pre Test Data

Identified Need/Rationale:

*2005 State Test indicates that 84% of present 6th grade students are below proficient in reading comprehension and 15% are proficient and above.
*Map testing indicates that 74% of the 6th grade show reading achievement scores that are below the performance level from a norm referenced group. Areas of focus include analysis of text and all forms of reading comprehension.
*Pre-test scores on main idea and supporting details – 10 out of 21 students scored 70% or above
*My score in Lesson Structure and Pacing as measured by the Instructional Rubric is a 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Classroom Outcome</th>
<th>Follow-up/Evidence:</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.04.05 Administer pre-test on main idea and supporting details in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>Data from pre-test from students in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 out of 21 students</td>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 out of 21 students</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 out of 21 students</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 out of 21 students</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.06.05 Researched strategies on main ideas and supporting details that requires students to use metacognition to activate and connect text to background knowledge and to ask questions while reading in order to identify main idea and supporting details.</td>
<td>Presented research-based strategies to leadership team. Leadership team made decision for clusters to begin with Kylene Beers’ the “Hand Strategy”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11.05 Schedule time to field test strategy in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>Began field testing in mentor’s classroom, the ‘Somebody’ portion of the “Hand Strategy,” and began development of critical attributes for first segment of strategy. 16 out of the 21 students were able to identify what the ‘Somebody’ in the text wanted by using strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.13.05 Teach a small group of students in the after school program to develop appropriate pacing of strategy for different learning styles.</td>
<td>Taught “Somebody” portion of strategy to small group of students. Realized struggling students needed more questioning and time to identify this portion – 4 out of 5 students were able to identify the “Somebody” of the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18.05 Implement modifications to pacing of strategy in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.25.05 Introduce the “But” portion of the “Hand Strategy” in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/Classroom Outcome:</td>
<td>Follow-up/Evidence:</td>
<td>Initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.27.05 Teach “But” portion of strategy to small group of students in after school program</td>
<td>Mentor taught strategy to whole group while I worked with small group and used questions and different pacing – of the 5 students that struggled the first time, 4 identified the “Somebody”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.01.05 Implement modifications to segmenting of strategy in mentor’s classroom for “But” portion of strategy</td>
<td>Taught the “But” portion of the “Hand Strategy” – had mentor script my closure of the lesson for feedback – 13 out of 21 students were able to identify the “But” of the text – met with mentor to get feedback on closure to lesson –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.03.05 Worked with mentor’s students again on “But” portion of strategy and provided list of questions for students to ask themselves as they answer the “But” of the text</td>
<td>Taught “But” portion of strategy to small group of students. Incorporated questioning and segmented steps differently for this group – 3 out of 5 students were able to identify the “But” of the text – Realized this is more difficult than the “Somebody” and students will need additional practice with this portion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce the “So - then” portion of the “Hand Strategy” in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>Mentor taught strategy to whole group while I worked with small group and used questions and different pacing – of the 8 students that struggled the first time, 4 identified the “But” of the text – had all students to reflect on strategy and provide a summary to a partner as part of lesson’s closure. Placed students in groups to identify “But” and modeled for them how to ask each other questions – different groups had different texts based on their ability which provided for different pacing among the groups to identify the “But”. Of the mentor’s 21 students, 19 identified the “But” of the text. Had other master teacher script lesson for LSP – received score of 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.08.05 Introduce the “So-then” portion of the “Hand Strategy” in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>Taught “So - then” portion of the “Hand Strategy” – had other master teacher script the lesson for descriptors for Lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.10.05 Teach “So-then” portion of strategy to small group of students in after school program</td>
<td>Structure and pacing – 13 out of 21 students were able to identify the “But” of the text – met with mentor to get feedback on closure to lesson –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15.05 Implement modifications to segmenting of “So-then” portion of strategy in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>Taught “so-then” strategy in mentor’s classroom with focus on questions for students to ask each other in pair/share – 16 out of 21 students could identify the so-then of text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taught portion of strategy to small group of students and provided list of questions to guide them in identifying the so-then – made modifications to this portion of strategy based on time it took students to identify the So-then – 3 out of 5 students identified the So-then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity/Classroom Outcome:</td>
<td>Follow-up/Evidence:</td>
<td>Initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.17.05 Combine all portions of strategy and teach small groups of students in after school program</td>
<td>Mentor taught strategy to whole group while I worked with small group and used questions and different pacing – of the 5 students that struggled the first time, 4 identified the “So-then” of the text – had all students to reflect on strategy and provide a summary to a partner as part of lesson’s closure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.22.05 Combine all portions of strategy and teach in mentor’s classroom</td>
<td>4 out of 5 students were able to apply all portions and identify main idea and supporting details – will continue working with one student who has difficulty with the So-then portion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.29.05 Administer post-test</td>
<td>Team-taught with mentor so we could work with small groups of students – used varying texts again which affected pacing for groups – Of the 21 students, 18 students were able to apply strategy to identify main idea and supporting details of their text- I will continue working with the 3 students in a small group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 out of 21 students</td>
<td>4 90 – 100%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 out of 21 students</td>
<td>3 80 – 90%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 out of 21 students</td>
<td>2 70 – 80%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 out of 21 students</td>
<td>1 below 70%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal observed a lesson and gave me a score of 4 in Lesson Structure and Pacing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Scores for master teacher’s Individual Growth Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptors</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Step One: Identify the Need**  
- Rationale clearly based on specific student data as defined by the cluster and school plans, **with links to instructional rubric***  
- Teacher competency area/goal:  
  - Is measurable in terms of specific student outcomes and **teacher outcomes**  
  - Is clearly defined  
  - Leads to specific classroom applications | 5.0 | Goal is based on analysis of student data in a specific area of need which is main idea and supporting details. This leads to specific application of a strategy to address a student need. The student portion of the goal is measurable and clearly defined using an assessment tool aligned to the high stakes test. The teacher portion of the goal is clearly defined and is measurable using the TAP Instructional Rubric. |
| **Step Two: Obtain**  
- New learning comes from credible sources (evidence of proven application showing student growth) and is explicitly connected to student learning need. | 5.0 | New learning is from a credible source for reading strategies, Kylene Beers. The strategy implemented is focused on the identified student need in the area of main idea and supporting details. Evidence is provided that shows continual student growth resulting from implementation of the new learning. |
| **Step Three: Develop**  
- With systematic assistance from master and mentor teachers, the teacher follows a learning continuum where he/she observes an exemplary demonstration of a skill, is coached, observed, and assisted to assure effective implementation with his or her students. | 3.0 | The mentor and master teacher each observed the master teacher once and provided feedback in the teacher’s area of refinement. However, beyond the master and mentor teaching the strategy simultaneously with different groups of students, evidence of support to assure effective implementation of the strategy with the students was not provided. There was also limited ongoing support provided by other members of the leadership team. |
| **Step Four: Apply**  
- Teacher applies new learning in classroom **while continually** monitoring student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective. | 5.0 | Student work is continually monitored as a whole class and in small groups of students. Results from student work were used to develop modifications and impact future instruction. |
| **Step Five: Evaluate**  
- Evidence of and results from teacher activities are measurable in terms of student achievement and **teacher growth**. | 5.0 | Evidence is provided that the teacher activities resulted in increased student achievement. The master teacher also improved in her area of refinement as measured by the TAP Instructional Rubric. Her score increased to a 4 from a 3. |

*Note: The goal needs to be set from the school/cluster plan, but the method of getting to that goal (teacher process) can be informed by the rubric.*
The Case Study – Guiding and Monitoring Individual Coaching Relationships

Statement of Purpose:

A Case Study is to a Leadership Team what student work is to a cluster group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Work</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through examination of student work samples, <strong>cluster members</strong> learn about their <strong>instructional practice</strong> and its impact on student learning.</td>
<td>Through examination of artifacts in a Case Study, <strong>Leadership Team members</strong> learn about the <strong>peer coaching practice</strong> and its impact on the collaborative learning culture within the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A case study is approximately a 10 minute oral presentation of the IGP with questions regarding the work of a mentor/master teacher with a career teacher through the STEPS for Effective Learning. Artifacts along with graphs showing student progress may be used to represent the work done within each STEP. The Case Study is a reflective exercise semi-formalizing the daily work that mentor and master teachers do with teachers they are mentoring and making the work “visible” for the purpose of observing the work and providing feedback.

It is recommended that Leadership Teams regularly monitor and provide support to the peer-coaching process and the development of IGPs throughout the school. The rubric for IGPs can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of both the written IGP and the case study. Through regular presentations of Case Studies during Leadership Team meetings, members are able to develop common understandings of the peer-coaching process with a focus on improving student achievement.

Process for Developing a Case Study:

- The Leadership Team may develop a schedule of case study presentations among their team on a bi-monthly basis.
- Mentor and master teachers collect artifacts and student data from their work with their assigned career teachers as part of their daily work when it is their turn for a case study presentation to the Leadership Team. (same question as above about artifacts- LT members will ask this)
- Occasionally, a case study might be presented to the entire staff or in cluster groups during a staff meeting as part of developing a school culture of collaboration and learning.

Examples of Case Studies and a Template:

The following pages contains the guiding questions used in developing a case study

- **Outline of STEPS Case Study Presentation Questions:**
  (Evaluators may ask other clarifying questions if needed.)

**STEP 1:** How did you identify the problem or need?
**STEP 2:** What new learning did you acquire? Why was this learning selected? How did you acquire it?

**STEP 3:** How did you develop this new learning for the classroom? (Please describe the continuum of support provided by the master/mentor teacher.)

**STEP 4:** How was the impact of the intervention monitored to ensure proper implementation?

**STEP 5:** Please provide evidence of increased student achievement that resulted from the chosen intervention. *(For a score of 5, a graphic representation is required.)* What did you do, or plan to do with the children who are still not proficient?
TAP Instructional Rubrics

Part A: Explanation of Rubric Indicators

"When people say they work at a good school, what do they mean?"
-Glickman

Introduction:

To measure teaching skills, knowledge and responsibilities, TAP has defined a set of professional indicators required of all TAP teachers. A comprehensive rubric has been developed to measure teachers’ performance in each of those indicators. It is essential that all teachers in a TAP school develop an in-depth understanding of how teachers’ performance will be measured using this rubric. Understanding the indicators in isolation does not guarantee that teachers will accurately and consistently implement them. Teachers also need to see what each indicator looks like in the context of instructional practice in order to understand how they are accurately applied.

Throughout this handbook, we have emphasized that it is the responsibility of the cluster leader to continually define and demonstrate how these indicators support teachers as they implement instructional strategies used to address specific identified student needs. Therefore, it is essential for cluster leaders to understand the TAP Instructional Rubric and how the indicators describe effective teaching that results in increased student achievement. Master and mentor teachers should model and label the indicators when facilitating cluster, as well as in the classroom when providing follow-up support to teachers.

While many instructional strategies may be considered “proven best practices,” it takes a high-quality implementation of these strategies in order for them to have a positive impact on student achievement. In the same way, application of the teaching indicators apart from a specific instructional purpose will not have a positive impact on student achievement. Only when teachers adeptly implement instructional strategies and apply the TAP Instructional Rubric indicators, will student achievement gains be realized.

Increasing Student Achievement with the Support of the TAP Instructional Rubric:

The TAP Instructional Rubric should not be the central focus of cluster learning, except during the first cluster cycle for first year schools. Nevertheless, an effective cluster leader knows how to embed elements of the TAP Instructional Rubric as he/she models the new learning for cluster members. The leader should also make connections for cluster members such as how practicing these elements impacts student achievement and why they are critical in making instruction effective.
In this way, effective cluster leaders make clear connections between effective instructional strategies and the implementation of the various indicators of the TAP rubric through modeling in clusters and support provided in the classrooms. At times, this means that elements of the rubric will be incorporated into a strategy’s critical attributes. At other times, the cluster leader may model indicators from this rubric while he/she teaches teachers as if they were students. By doing so, the cluster leader will maximize the potential for proficient transfer of the new learning into the classroom resulting in increased student achievement. The graphic below represents how a cluster leader integrates the rubric indicators into the entire process.

In this graphic, the leadership team analyzes standardized test data to develop a school plan based on the identified student need. The school plan informs the cluster long-range plan so that the two are aligned. The cluster leader then selects research- based and field tested student focused strategies to present in cluster that support the cluster cycle goal, thus supporting the school plan. The effective cluster leader also knows the target areas on each cluster member’s IGP, and the indicators from the rubric where refinement is needed. Schools utilizing the Performance Management System (PAMS) will have access to this information by school, cluster, grade, and content area.

When teaching strategies aimed at increasing student achievement in a specific area of need, an effective cluster leader looks for opportunities to reinforce the learning on the IGPs and to teach indicators from the rubric where they naturally fit into the strategy. In addition to evaluating the impact of the strategy on student learning, the cluster leader should also evaluate the cluster members’ growth on the targeted TAP rubric indicator, and use this information to decide the type of support teachers will need (See Section 3, page 105 on developing IGP goals)

Another important way in which a cluster leader uses the TAP Instructional Rubric is in her/his presentation of cluster learning. Research has shown that the same teaching techniques that are effective in teaching students are effective with adults. Therefore cluster leaders should utilize the TAP Instructional Rubric as they plan cluster meetings. Indeed, many of the expectations of the cluster leader (see Cluster Observation Rubric page 82), are aligned to the TAP Instructional Rubric. In the following pages, we will provide specific examples for how the TAP Instructional Rubric and the Cluster Observation Rubric connect.

TAP’s Teaching Skills, Knowledge and Responsibility Standards are divided into four domains. Within each domain, performance indicators are listed with bulleted descriptors
and a rubric specifying three performance levels for measuring actual teacher performance.

* Teachers earn a score of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for each indicator.

### Teaching Skills, Knowledge and Responsibility

**Performance Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Designing and Planning Instruction</th>
<th>3. The Learning Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Instructional Plans</td>
<td>a. Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Student Work</td>
<td>b. Managing Student Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Assessment</td>
<td>c. Respectful Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Implementing Instruction</th>
<th>4. Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Standards and Objectives</td>
<td>a. Staff Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Motivating Students</td>
<td>b. Instructional Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Presenting Instructional Content</td>
<td>c. School Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Lesson Structure and Pacing</td>
<td>d. Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Activities and Materials</td>
<td>e. Community Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Questioning</td>
<td>f. Growing and Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Academic Feedback</td>
<td>Professionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Grouping Students</td>
<td>g. Reflecting Upon Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Teacher Content Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Teacher Knowledge of Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Problem Solving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section of the *TAP Handbook* will review the important elements of the first three TAP Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibility Performance Standards. The details of the fourth domain, Responsibilities, will be left to each school to develop based on the expectations for the teachers at each individual site or district. However, we provide samples of the master, mentor, and career teachers’ responsibilities in the survey located in the TEPAG Training Document. In the next few pages, you will find a presentation of all the indicators for Designing and Planning Instruction, Implementing Instruction, and the Learning Environment. Each indicator’s descriptors will be explained with examples of how these descriptors might be implemented in a classroom and modeled in cluster. When appropriate, we will make connections between the TAP Instructional Rubric and the Cluster Observation Rubric. Finally, we will include suggested coaching questions for leadership team members to utilize when conferencing with teachers.
Designing and Planning Instruction

This section includes resources and information on the three indicators under Designing and Planning Instruction:

- Instructional Plans
- Student Work
- Assessment

Time spent developing strong lesson plans yields many benefits. Lesson plans contribute to better-managed classrooms and more effective and efficient learning experiences for students.

Exemplary Descriptors for Instructional Plans:

- Measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards
- Activities, materials, and assessments that:
  - Are aligned to state standards
  - Are sequenced from basic to complex (teaching of sub-objectives follows a logical progression)
  - Build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students’ lives, and integrate other disciplines
  - Provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure
- Evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners
- Evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs

Instruction in a TAP school is based heavily on state standards as well as analysis of formative and summative student assessments. Therefore, it is important that teachers incorporate these into their daily planning.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Instructional Plans

- Why is aligning the objectives to the standards important?
- Which standards seem the most difficult for students to master? Why do you think students are having difficulty mastering those in particular?
- Which sub-objectives need to be taught for students to master a standard?
- Was there a connection between the students’ mastery of the learning objective and the lesson plan?
- How did you decide to choose the activities, materials, and assessments included in this lesson plan?
- How did you plan to accommodate students’ individual interests and needs?
Cluster Group Learning

The cluster leader needs to verbalize these connections as he/she models the new learning. The cluster leader can do this by identifying the learning objective, student accommodations, and assessment tools from his/her field testing of the strategy.

- Connect the new learning of a strategy to the standard being targeted to support teachers in developing plans that are aligned to the standards.
- Define the learning objective for students as it relates to the strategy and standard being targeted.
- Develop an assessment that provides teachers with evidence that students have developed proficiency in a specific skill or standard. Define the criteria for proficiency.
- Although Cluster Meeting Records may not include all the elements of a high quality lesson plan, it is recommended that cluster leaders create a clear plan for how they will incorporate all the essential components of a cluster into each of their meetings. Like a quality lesson, it is also essential during cluster that all the activities align to the objective (cluster Meeting Outcome), that the new learning builds on previous learning and directly supports the identified student need, and that appropriate pacing exists for all the elements of a cluster to occur. (See the Cluster Observation Rubric, Leader as Facilitator on page 88).

Evaluating Lesson Plans:

It is suggested that leadership teams select a lesson plan format and that a system be developed that provides feedback to teachers on individual lesson plans on a regular basis. This development would be an appropriate activity for a leadership team meeting. Leadership team members might bring examples of lesson plans to a leadership team meeting and evaluate them utilizing the rubric for a specific purpose such as checking the alignment of activities, materials and assessments, or evaluating the learning objectives to ensure alignment to state standards. By focusing on specific descriptors of this indicator, a leadership team can more narrowly focus their learning and evaluation of teachers’ lesson plans. Specific written feedback can then be provided to teachers. An outcome for this type of activity may be: “Cluster leaders will provide copies of their own lesson plans to teachers as they relate to the strategy being modeled in cluster with an emphasis on a specific area of need identified during the leadership team’s lesson plan evaluations.”

Student Work

The development and evaluation of student work that enhances and reinforces the instruction in the classroom should be infused into the cluster leader’s modeling of new learning. The student work and/or assignments should also be developed so that it is aligned to the pre-test and post-test for the cluster cycle which should be aligned to the high stakes test. It is critical that the cluster is able to use the analysis of student work throughout a cycle as a predictor for how students will perform on the cycle post-test. If students are not progressing properly or progressing more quickly than expected, the cluster long range plan should be adjusted to reflect students’ changing needs. Therefore the analysis of student work should also be an indicator for when the cluster should post-test.
Exemplary Descriptors for Student Work:

Assignments require students to:

- Organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it
- Draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing
- Connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives both inside and outside of school

Suggested Coaching Questions on Student Work

- How closely was the student work aligned to the lesson objective and/or state standard?
- How were the criteria for scoring student work communicated to students?
- Why is it important to clearly communicate the criteria for the student work to students prior to their completion of the assignment?
- What types of thinking or problem solving skills did the work require of the students?
- Using Bloom’s Taxonomy, at what level is the student work that was assigned? Is it at the appropriate level considering the students’ stage of learning?
- How are the criteria for student work aligned to the standards and high stakes test? Why is it important that they are aligned?
- How engaged did students appear when they completed the assignment?
- How did the completed work demonstrate the evaluation criteria? Did most students’ work meet the teacher’s expectations? If not, what reasons might explain why?
- How did the completed work demonstrate the evaluation criteria? Did most students’ work meet the teacher’s expectations? If not, what reasons might explain why?
- How are the guidelines for student work going to mesh with the next grade level’s guidelines and state standards?

Cluster Group Learning

- When field testing the strategy, the cluster leader develops the expectations for student work (criteria) cluster members will use as evidence of student mastery.
- A cluster leader should identify for cluster members how the student work was developed and the level of Bloom’s Taxonomy at which students will be expected to work. Cluster leaders might also make connections to the descriptors under Thinking and Problem Solving on the TAP Instructional Rubric during this time for the cluster members. Student work that requires higher levels of thinking and problem solving will provide evidence that teachers have met descriptors under Student Work and those of the Instructional Rubric.

Looking at student work as a cluster group is a critical part of cluster work. Members may bring examples of student work for the purpose of analyzing characteristics of sub-groups or for isolating reasons students are still not mastering a specific skill by comparing the work to specific and commonly agreed upon criteria.
Assessment

Effective assessment is a fundamental part of instruction and learning. The goal of this section is to provide information and examples and to expand your knowledge of assessment. An effective assessment plan answers the questions, “What do I want my students to be able to do as a result of my teaching?” and “How do I know the students learned what I taught?” When this question is asked and answered regularly, the teacher can effectively plan, diagnose and intervene on a continual basis to raise student achievement. See page 27 for Assessment – Measurement of Learning.

Exemplary Descriptors for Assessment Plans:

- Are aligned with state content standards.
- Have clear measurement criteria.
- Measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test).
- Require extended written tasks.
- Are portfolio-based with clear illustrations of student progress towards state content standards.
- Include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Assessment

- What criteria was used in developing or selecting the assessment(s)?
- What types of assessments were used to evaluate student learning?
- How did the assessment(s) used accommodate the needs and interests of individual students?
- How will the results of the assessment(s) be used to impact future instruction?

Cluster Group Learning

- Model how to assess students’ mastery of the identified skill on which the cluster is focused when teachers implement the strategy in their classrooms.
- Cluster leaders need to model how they analyzed the results of formative and summative assessments and how they used these results to plan instruction. This analysis should provide direction for the cluster leader in identifying modifications teachers may need to make to the strategy based on the results from his/her field testing. If a cluster leader has not analyzed assessments from field testing, then he/she will not be able to provide a model for the teachers on how to analyze their students’ assessments nor will cluster leaders be able to clearly explain how they made modifications based upon students’ needs.
Implementing Instruction

This section includes resources and information on the twelve indicators of the Teaching Standards under Implementing Instructions:

1) Standards and Objectives
2) Motivating Students
3) Presenting Instructional Content
4) Lesson Structure and Pacing
5) Learning Activities and Materials
6) Questioning
7) Academic Feedback
8) Grouping Students
9) Teacher Content Knowledge
10) Teacher Knowledge of Students
11) Thinking
12) Problem Solving

Standards and Objectives

Planning effective lessons aligned to the standards is dependent upon the teacher’s ability to create and communicate clearly defined learning outcomes or objectives appropriate for the students. In many ways this indicator is the foundation for all other indicators because if the teacher is not clear about what he or she wants students to know and be able to do as a result of the lesson, the balance of the lesson cannot be properly developed or implemented. Both the students and the teacher should understand what is to be accomplished during each lesson and the purpose for what takes place.

Exemplary Descriptors for Standards and Objectives:

1) All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated.
2) Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson’s major objective.
3) Learning objectives are:
   - Consistently connected to what students have previously learned
   - Known from life experiences
   - Integrated with other disciplines
4) Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high.
5) State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson.
6) There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.

Descriptor 1: All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated.

The first descriptor under “Standards and Objectives” deals with the ability to “explicitly communicate” the objective or learning outcome whether it is a state standard or sub-objective of a standard. Before a learning objective can be clearly communicated, it must be clearly written.
There are three components of a clearly written objective:

1) Observable verbs / actions
2) Clear description of learning outcome
3) Measurable standards

Bloom’s Taxonomy can assist in writing objectives (see page 214). Observable verbs are arranged in order of complexity in thinking.

However, “explicitly communicated objectives” go beyond merely stating a clearly written objective or standard. Communicated implies that the teacher can be certain that the students know and understand the learning objective. This requires the teacher to continually make references to the objective/standard throughout the lesson and to make connections for what the teacher and students are doing as it relates to the lesson’s objective. This also provides purpose for what takes place during a lesson. The teacher and students may also refer to the stated objective/standard again at the end of the lesson for a reflection on how the students met the learning objective.

Descriptor 2: Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson’s major objective.

Once the objective is clearly defined, the next step is to develop the necessary sub-objectives. The selection of appropriate sub-objectives depends on the needs of the students, the complexity of the objective, and the content. There are three basic reasons for including sub-objectives:

- To review prior learning
- To teach a new sub-skill
- To teach a process that supports the main objective

Example 1:

Teacher - “Today we will be creating a graph that illustrates how classmates responded to a questionnaire about sports using the pie, bar, or line format. I have put together a rubric to assist you in completing this assignment.”

When looking at the objective above, several sub-objectives could be identified. In reality, the needs of the students would determine what sub-objectives to include. For this example, there are a few sub-objectives that would probably be included in this lesson so that all students could be successful:

- To understand how to apply the pie, bar, and line graph (prior learning)
- To be able to calculate results of surveys into percentages (prior learning)
- To be able to apply the rubric to the project (process)

Example 2:
Teacher - “Today we are going to write a paragraph about a character in the story we just read. First you will complete this graphic organizer. It will provide guidance in describing your character effectively. Next you can write the paragraph. Use this paragraph checklist when you do your final edit.”

This objective is very complex. It requires the student’s ability to do many things other than the main objective of writing a paragraph. To what degree the sub-objectives must be taught may vary. As one might expect, there are times when what appeared to be a sub-objective becomes the lesson’s objective based on the students’ needs. Here are a few of the identifiable sub-objectives for this objective:

- To apply a paragraph format (prior learning)
- To be able to apply the pre-writing graphic organizer (sub-skill)
- To be able to access each item on the checklist (process)
- To be able to identify characteristics of characters from a text

Descriptor 3: Learning objectives are: a. Consistently connected to what students have previously learned, b. Known from life experiences, c. Integrated with other disciplines

This descriptor is about making connections in learning. It is important for teachers to connect new learning to prior learning so students are able to see learning as a continuum and to make real-life connections about how this learning impacts their lives. This connection can be done in a variety of ways. This descriptor is closely related to the descriptors under Motivating Students and Teacher Knowledge of Students that refer to relevancy to students’ lives and the incorporation of their interests and cultural heritage.

Examples:

A teacher may model his/her thought process as she/he makes a connection to a specific topic and then lead students to do this through questioning. It may also be accomplished through group projects based on real-life scenarios. Students learning measurement may calculate the amount of carpet or paint needed to redecorate their room.

Students learning about the Great Depression may research how policies from Roosevelt’s New Deal continue to affect them today. It is also important for teachers to lead students to make connections for how what they learn in one content area connects to another content area. For example, when measuring or creating graphs in science, a teacher may make connections to math with an emphasis on math vocabulary students are learning. In literature classes, connections may be made for what is being read and a historical time period students may be studying in social studies. It is important to make such connections significant and meaningful to students.
Descriptor 4: Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high.

This descriptor deals with creating learning objectives and expectations that are demanding and of high quality for all students. Whether the teacher has succeeded in doing so can only be determined by the student’s response to the lesson. It is important to look at assessment and other diagnostic methods for determining what to teach. For an objective to be demanding and high for all students, a teacher may need to develop different activities and/or assessments for different levels of students within the class. It is important that all students are challenged by the learning objective.

This descriptor refers to not only clear expectations for what students are to do to support their learning, but also clear expectations for procedures and student behavior during the lesson. For expectations to be clear, students should be provided a model for what they are to do. This may include the use of visuals, teacher or student modeling, anchor papers and rubrics to demonstrate how student work will be assessed, written steps the students are to follow when completing the assignment, etc. If students are working in groups, expectations for each group member, as well as the expectation for the group as a whole, should be clearly explained. Students need to clearly understand how they will be held accountable for individual work and group work. Procedures for obtaining materials for the group work, the expected noise level, where students may work, etc. should all be clearly explained. This descriptor connects to the Presenting Instructional Content descriptor, (modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his/her performance expectations) and the Grouping descriptor, (all students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations).

Descriptor 5: State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson.

This descriptor deals with the importance of providing a visual display of the state standard or learning objective that can be referenced by the teacher and students throughout the lesson.

Posting the Standard or Objective:

Posting the state standards in the classroom provides a visual purpose for why students are learning what they are learning. However, it is not beneficial to post a standard that all students cannot see, is not referenced, or is not understood. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to reference the standard in language that students understand throughout the lesson to provide direction and focus. To derive full meaning from posting the standards, the following suggestions are made:

Many state standards are also the language of the state test. Therefore, it is important to post the standard as an opportunity to teach students vocabulary they will need to know to be successful. In some cases, teachers use pictures or symbols to expand meaning for them. This is especially true for lower grade students, visual learners and students not familiar with the English language.

- Post the standards in **large enough print so that all students can read** them from their seats. By doing this, the teacher can reference them any time and know that the students are able to see and read them. Posting standards that only can be read by the teacher does not provide a learning tool for the students.
- Post the standards **using some visual formatting such as webbing**, mapping or any other meaningful graphic organizer. This supports students in making connections among the standards and other content areas. For example, a teacher
may create a web for standards connected to what the students will be learning about World War II. The center of the web would reference World War II spokes or lines extending from the center would reference the sub-standards or objectives that will be part of the unit, such as significant individuals they will be studying, important battles, etc.

- Post anchor papers or **examples of exemplary student work** along with scoring rubrics to demonstrate how students will be assessed for meeting the standard(s). These exemplary pieces may be from former students or teacher-created examples.
- Post standards for a specific unit together in the classroom. By doing this, the teacher and/or students can follow the progression of sub-objectives for a particular unit and date the standards as they are learned. This method of posting standards can provide students with a clear direction for a new unit of study.
- Provide students copies of standards to keep in their notebooks which they can use to record when each is taught and mastered.

**Referencing the Standards:**

State standards are usually broad in scope. Before mastery of the standard can be accomplished, it is often necessary that students master many subordinate sub-objectives first. A metaphor provides an understanding of how the standards relate to teaching on a daily basis. A state standard can be compared to the main idea of a story, while the daily lessons represent the supporting details. Therefore, by referencing the state standards, the student has an opportunity to relate the lesson to the “big picture” and to prior learning.

**Involving the Students:**

There are many ways in which students can be involved with the referencing process for the standards. The following suggestions have been effective in classrooms:

- A student is assigned the job of recording standards. After the lesson objective is identified, the student records a date on the section of the standard that is being addressed in the lesson. This method provides additional purpose for displaying the standard in a manner that the teacher and students can continually reference.
- Students may have the standards at their desks where they each individually record the date beside the standard(s) represented in the lesson for the day and reflect on how they met the standard at the conclusion of the lesson.
- Students record at the top of the assigned paper which standard(s) is being addressed during the lesson.

Students may also engage in a think/pair/share activity during which time students reflect and verbalize on the meaning of the standard and how they met it during the lesson. This activity also connects to the **Activities and Materials descriptors**; provide time for reflection and provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction. By allowing students to pair/share, a teacher implements the descriptor under **Grouping**; the instructional grouping of students also becomes varied.

Some teachers record the standard(s) being addressed on each student assignment. This helps when recording scores in the grade book as well. The more a teacher can document when and how the standards have been taught, the more precisely a teacher can provide evidence for students’ mastery of a standard. Parents, board members, principals, and other constituents are becoming increasingly insistent that there be evidence that the standards have been effectively taught and mastered.

Many schools are posting student work and identifying the standards that are represented in the displays throughout the school. By displaying student work related to the state standards, parents and other visitors understand and appreciate what students are expected to learn. Showing work
in this way also develops a better understanding of how a complex set of state standards progresses.

Descriptor 6: There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.

This descriptor is the most important one of all. No matter what teachers do or don’t do, if students don’t learn the information, then it is a waste of time and effort. Teachers must focus on what students have learned as opposed to what they have taught. Effective teachers plan formative assessments (verbal and/or written) that enable them to check for student mastery of the material taught and make modifications to their future lesson plans to meet the needs still evident in the student work.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Standards and Objectives

- How do you decide on the standards/objectives you will teach?
- How do you identify the sub-objectives for a lesson?
- How do you decide on the method you will use to communicate the standards/objectives to students?
- How do you utilize a visual of the standards/objectives during a lesson?
- How do you communicate your expectations to the students?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective?

Cluster Group Learning

- 1st, 2nd and 5th descriptors of Standards and Objectives: When a cluster leader communicates the expected outcome for cluster, he/she is modeling the first descriptor from this indicator. To deepen teachers’ understanding and sense of purpose, a cluster leader may ask teachers how their understanding of the outcome supports their new learning. This type of question can assist teachers in making connections for how student learning is supported by their understanding of standards/objectives that are clearly communicated. Many cluster leaders post the school goal and cluster goals in the meeting room as a visual to use in modeling the importance of displaying standards in a classroom. By displaying these and referencing them each cluster, the cluster leader models how teachers need to make connections for the objective of a lesson to the standard to which it is aligned.
- 2nd and 3rd descriptors of Standards and Objectives: When a cluster leader reviews what the cluster group has been working on, he/she models how to connect current learning objectives to previous learning. This also relates to the indicator, Leader as Facilitator, on the Cluster Observation Rubric which states that cluster meetings begin with a review of previous cluster learning.
- 4th and 5th descriptors of Standards and Objectives: A cluster leader must have evidence that teachers have demonstrated mastery of the new learning for there to be an immediate application of the learning into the classroom. By providing sufficient development time and clear expectations for what teachers are to develop, a cluster leader models how this evidence can be obtained from teachers. During development, a cluster leader should be circulating among the teachers and questioning them to gather evidence that teachers have met mastery. By identifying for teachers what he/she is doing, a cluster leader is able to model these descriptors for the teachers and lead them in making connections for methods they can use in obtaining this
• When modeling a strategy in cluster, the cluster leader can use the opportunity to model effective standards and objectives to teachers as if they were students. During the model the cluster leader would connect how the strategy addresses state standards and present an objective as she/he would in a classroom. This would increase the sense of purpose for the cluster learning and when developing the strategy, members would be more likely to also emulate this best practice when they transfer the strategy into their classrooms.

Motivating Students

This indicator focuses on a teacher’s ability to organize and present the content in a manner that motivates students to learn. For a teacher to be able to develop these types of learning experiences, a teacher must have an in depth knowledge of the students he/she teaches. Therefore, this indicator connects strongly to Teacher Knowledge of Students.

Exemplary Descriptors for Motivating Students:

1) The teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students.
2) The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity and exploration are valued.
3) The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort.

For content to be personally meaningful to students there must be a clearly communicated purpose for student learning. Students need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is important for them to master and how their mastery of this will impact their own lives. Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity and exploration provide opportunities for students to generate questions and conduct their own research or explore to locate the answers. When students have opportunities to generate their own questions about a given topic, their motivation to learn is usually increased as the learning becomes student directed than teacher directed.

Example 1:
A teacher presents a lesson on immigration during the 1860’s. She brings in current newspaper articles on immigrants and refugees moving to the United States. Students also interview individuals who have immigrated to the United States. These activities make the content study relevant to the students’ lives and personally meaningful. Students also have the opportunity to develop their own questions to ask during the interviews which provide experiences which value inquiry. This example also provides real world application of immigration.

Example 2:
A teacher presents a lesson on measurement. Students design a new school cafeteria applying the measurement skills taught. An architect speaks to the students and explains how measurement is used in his profession.

Teachers may reinforce and reward effort in a variety of ways. Students may be rewarded through verbal praise or recognition. A teacher may also use several student examples of work as a model for other students to follow. When a teacher effectively uses Academic Feedback (see page 151) he/she is also reinforcing and rewarding effort by acknowledging students’ responses with an explanation for why the response may be accurate or inaccurate. This type of feedback supports an environment in which students feel safe to take risks and respond to questions. In this way it is rewarding and reinforcing their efforts.

**Suggested Coaching Questions on Motivating Students**

- How do you organize the content of a lesson so that it is meaningful and relevant to the students?
- How do you develop learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to ask questions and explore?
- How do you reinforce and reward the efforts of all students?
- Why is it important for students to have opportunities to develop their own questions and explore for the answers?
- How does student motivation impact student achievement?

**Cluster Group Learning**

- When modeling new learning in cluster, a cluster leader should include how he/she made the strategy meaningful and relevant to students during field testing and successful results.
- Cluster leaders need to reinforce and reward the efforts of cluster members as they participate in the new learning and develop the new learning for implementation in their classrooms. By doing this, they are modeling for the members the types of comments they should be using in their own classrooms.
- By bringing in their own student work, analyzing it, and identifying continued student needs, cluster members are able to see the connection between cluster learning and their own students making cluster time highly motivating. Additionally, when a cluster leader can use field test data to show that the strategy being learned in cluster will directly address the needs of the members’ students, and student work is integrated into the development of the new learning, it serves to further motivate teachers to participate.

**Presenting Instructional Content**

This indicator deals with the method in which content is taught within a lesson. The use of visuals and a teacher’s ability to clearly communicate performance expectations in a concise
and logically sequenced manner are addressed by this indicator’s descriptors. The use of visuals with examples, illustrations, analogies, and/or labels are important tools to use when introducing new concepts and can lead students to mastery of specific skills in a more efficient manner. However, it may be that all of these are not included in one lesson. It is important that they are used effectively and appropriately for the content and students taught.

**Exemplary descriptors for Presenting Instructional Content include:**

1. Visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson
2. Examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas
3. Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations
4. Concise communication
5. Logical sequencing and segmenting
6. All essential information
7. No irrelevant, confusing, or nonessential information

**Descriptor 1: Use of visuals**

The first item under this indicator refers to the effective use of visual materials to assist the learner in making connections with prior learning and in clarifying newly acquired concepts. Visuals that preview the lesson also provide students with a direction for where they are headed and what they will be doing. They support students in identifying and understanding the progression of the lesson. Based on these indicators, there are two main applications for graphic organizers or visuals.

Visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson:

- Visuals that assist in the learning process
- Visuals that organize information for the learner

It is important to note that internal summaries (mini reviews within a lesson of what has been taught) may be provided visually or orally by the teacher and students. When a teacher continually reviews sub-objectives in order to connect to the next sub-objective, students are led to ultimately move towards mastery of the lesson objective. Internal summaries provide students opportunities to have concepts restated and to reflect within a lesson on what they are learning as opposed to waiting for a review of all concepts at the end of the lesson. Internal summaries may be viewed as mini reviews within a lesson. Teachers can lead students in providing these summaries through his/her questions and group discussions.

**Descriptor 2: Examples, Illustrations, Analogies, and Labels for New Concepts and Ideas**

Words, mental pictures, and other clarifying techniques simplify and organize new information for the learner. Application of the methods listed in this descriptor enhances learning in the following ways:

**Examples:**
When presenting a new concept, carefully selected examples help students to understand information. For example, during a lesson about metaphors, the teacher provided visual examples of metaphors from her own writing. She also modeled her thinking process as she created the metaphors. This type of example not only provided opportunities for students to view metaphors but also to gain an understanding for how they were created within the teacher’s writing.

**Illustrations:**

Providing an illustration of what is being studied helps all learners, especially visual learners. Before dissecting a frog, students studied an illustration depicting the internal organs. The illustration also demonstrated how to cut into the frog. Teachers may also use paintings or photographs to provide illustrations of new concepts or historical time periods.

**Analogies:**

There are times when analogies clarify information for learners. To clarify the distances related to the solar system, a teacher introduced nine common spheres of similar proportions as the planets. She then took students out on the playground and had students arrange them at appropriate distances from the sun making clear connections for how what they were doing related to distances within the solar system. In this example, students actually participated in the analogy. Another example of an analogy is the comparison of appropriate graphic organizers to the choosing of appropriate tools to hammer in nails or tighten screws. The teacher explains to students that graphic organizers are ‘tools’ to support their organization of material and different organizers support different tasks.

**Labels:**

Labels help clarify information. Students were having a difficult time writing complete sentences so the teacher decided to have students label the parts of their sentences. Pictures with labels may also be used to introduce vocabulary, important people, or new concepts. This type of labeling would be strong in its combined use of illustrations and labels. During a study of the solar system, the teacher modeled for the students how to label planets. During a study of the circulatory system, a teacher modeled how to label the parts of the heart and identify the function for each part.

**Descriptor 3: Modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations**

The ability to model the use of new information and the teacher’s expectations for student performance is one of the most important descriptors for this indicator. An effective teacher must be able to model desired outcomes. In order to model effectively, the teacher must be able to do the following:

- Know exactly what the expected outcome is
- Identify critical elements of the desired outcome
- Create clearly defined steps so learners can achieve the desired outcome
- Provide examples for how the completed project/assignment should look

**Example: Know Exactly What the Outcome Is**
A teacher explained to the students that the learning objective was for them to be able to identify physical characteristics of two characters from a novel and compare and contrast their characteristics. She told the students they would be expected to create an illustration of two characters from a novel the class was reading and then complete a Venn diagram to compare their characteristics. She chose two different characters to model her expectations and the thought process she went through in deciding how to draw the characters. She explained various ways the students could approach the project and provided clear criteria through the use of a rubric for how the finished project would be evaluated. She led the students to apply the rubric to her work as an additional way to ensure they understood her expectations for their work. She then modeled how she took the characteristics of the two drawings and used a Venn diagram to organize the similarities and differences in the drawings (characteristics of the two characters) Students were able to clearly understand the expected outcome for the lesson and for the expectations for their work.

Example: Create Clearly Defined Steps

When modeling the expectations for the assignment, the teacher clearly explained the order in which the students would need to complete the steps required for the assignment. First, they would need to select two important characters with criteria for how to select these. Then students would need to identify specific characteristics of these characters that would be incorporated into their illustrations. The explanation would continue through each step. To support visual learners, the teacher may display a written list of the steps on the board or chart paper.

Example: Identify the Critical Elements of the Desired Outcome

As the teacher modeled her work of the steps in the above example, she identified the elements or requirements for the student work. Using the rubric for the assignments, she identified each required element of the illustration and Venn diagram on her examples. This provided students a clear understanding of what needed to be included in each assignment and how the elements would be evaluated.
Descriptors 4–7: Concise information, logical sequencing and segmenting, all essential information, no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information

These descriptors relate to a teacher’s knowledge of the content he/she is teaching and his/her ability to clearly explain the content to students in a logical manner. For this to occur, a teacher must first clearly define the learning objective for the lesson and then maintain the focus of the lesson on this objective which may require teachers to redirect students’ comments. The sequencing of the lesson relates to the sub-objectives that are taught within a lesson. Sub-objectives should be taught or reviewed in an appropriate sequence for the grade level and ability of the students. The segmenting of the lesson relates to the pacing of the lesson. An effective teacher will provide sufficient time for the introduction of the lesson, the instruction within the lesson, the student activities and closure. Although, these may be embedded within each other during a given lesson, the segmenting of the lesson allows sufficient time for each to take place so that students can have opportunities to master the learning objective. Therefore, these descriptors are closely connected to the descriptor “teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches” under Teacher Content Knowledge, and the descriptor “pacing is appropriate, and sometimes provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates” under Lesson Structure and Pacing.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Presenting Instructional Content

- How do you decide on the types of visuals you will use during a lesson?
- Why is it important for the teacher to model his/her expectations for students?
- How do you plan for effective modeling during a lesson?
- How do students clearly know your expectations for their assignments and for what are they are to learn?
- When planning a lesson, how do you decide on the sequencing of the instruction within the lesson?
- When planning a lesson, how do you decide on the manner in which the different elements of the lesson will be segmented?
- How do you maintain focus in a lesson on the learning objective?

Cluster Group Learning

- When cluster leaders provide a visual for what members will be doing during the meeting, they are modeling the use of visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson and preview the organization of the lesson. This use of visuals may be done through the use of the Cluster Meeting Record or a chart identifying what the members will be doing during the meeting. By making reference to these, a cluster leader models for members how these visuals can be utilized.
- When cluster leaders model the new learning for teachers with a clear explanation of the strategy, or chunk of the strategy, along with the critical
attributes, they are modeling the third descriptor. A cluster leader needs to ask him/herself how will teachers know exactly what they need to do in the classroom to ensure their teaching of the strategy results in increased student achievement. For this to occur, teachers need a model. In this same way, students must have a model of a teacher’s explanations. Therefore, a cluster leader needs to clearly model for the teachers how they should model in their own classrooms. This may include specific visuals that need to be used, examples of analogies to support student understanding, and appropriate sequencing of the instruction. Through clear modeling of these elements in cluster, a cluster leader provides clarity for how teachers need to present the strategy (content) in their classrooms so the result is increased student achievement.

- Finally, descriptors 4-7 play a role in the how a strategy is “chunked” to ensure that the new learning for teachers is manageable and able to be mastered by the end of the cluster meeting. Of course, the ultimate driver of cluster learning is student data but cluster leaders also need to take into consideration the amount of new learning teachers can learn, develop and implement proficiently before the next meeting.

Lesson Structure and Pacing

"Good teaching must be slow enough so that it is not confusing, and fast enough so that it is not boring; like all arts, teaching is as much a matter of timing as of form or content; and masters of timing are rare in any art." - Sydney J. Harris

This indicator blends time and form as it applies to instruction. It addresses the effective segmenting of the lesson so that sufficient time is allocated to all parts of the lesson to best support student learning. Therefore, this indicator connects closely to the descriptor, logical sequencing and segmenting under Presenting Instructional Content.

Exemplary Descriptors for Lesson Structure and Pacing:

1) All lessons start promptly.
2) The lesson’s structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, end, and time for reflection.
3) Pacing is brisk and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates.
4) Routines for distributing materials are seamless.
5) No instructional time is lost during transition.

Descriptors Focused on Time/Pacing:

The rubric indicator focuses on the following issues associated with instructional time:

1) Prompt start
2) Different learning rates
3) Seamless routines
4) Smooth transition

Starting promptly, building smooth transitions, and developing seamless routines can be done with practice and careful planning. The greatest challenge presented in this indicator is the ability to provide enough time so that all students of varying rates of learning can
complete each learning task. Therefore, it is important that a teacher has knowledge of the various learning needs of his/her students.

When reviewing evidence from a lesson for these descriptors, the third descriptor, pacing is brisk, refers to the efficient use of instructional time during the lesson not the speed of the lesson. Was appropriate time devoted to each element of the lesson? Did the lesson continue to flow or was there time wasted in which students were not focused or engaged in the learning? If the pacing is brisk, all students remain focused and engaged in learning throughout the lesson. Students do not experience ‘down time’ while waiting on other students to complete assignments or on instruction that they have already mastered. Therefore, this descriptor connects to a teacher’s use of student feedback to monitor and adjust instruction under Academic Feedback to ensure that the pacing of the lesson is brisk and meets the needs of all students.

**Example:**

A teacher begins a lesson on the causes of the Revolutionary War with an explanation of the learning objective and a preview of the lesson (clear beginning). He then provides direct instruction by modeling how to complete a graphic organizer on the causes and effects of the war. Students are led to finish the organizer on their own as they read the text or other source of information. Students who are below grade level in reading continue to receive direct instruction from the teacher and assistance in completing the graphic organizer. Students who are on grade level or above complete the assignment independently and are provided additional activities to enhance their understanding of the causes (pacing provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates). Before students are dismissed, the teacher brings the class together again and reviews the objective and has students identify the causes and effects they included on their graphic organizers (closure). Students complete an exit ticket before leaving class in which they reflect on which cause of the war they believe had the greatest impact (time for reflection).

**Suggested Coaching Questions on Lesson Structure and Pacing**

- How do you decide on the manner in which you will segment the different parts of a lesson?
- How do you plan for effective closure within a lesson?
- How do you plan for the pacing of a lesson that provides opportunities for students to learn that progress at different rates?
- How do you ensure that instructional time is used efficiently throughout a lesson so that all students remain actively engaged in learning?

**Cluster Group Learning**

- When cluster leaders model new learning in a cluster, they need to include how they began the lesson and how they provided closure to the lesson. The manner in which these were done should be clearly labeled for cluster members.
- In addition to including a clear beginning and closure in the modeling, cluster leaders should include a clear beginning and closure to the cluster which can be done by reviewing the school and cluster goals to set the purpose for the new learning and by providing a review of the new learning at the end of the cluster meeting. When cluster leaders do this, they need to make the
connection for members that they are modeling how a lesson should begin and end.
- Cluster leaders also model lesson structure and pacing by appropriately pacing for the different parts of a cluster.

**Activities and Materials**

This indicator addresses the variety and appropriateness of activities and materials that a teacher chooses to implement during a lesson. By using a variety of materials and activities, teachers are able to address various learning styles and intelligences. Therefore, the criteria used by teachers in choosing materials and activities should be those that clearly support the lesson objectives and are related to the needs of the students. Therefore, this indicator is closely related to Teacher Knowledge of Students. In order to plan appropriate activities and materials, a teacher must have knowledge of the needs and interests of the students.

**Exemplary descriptors for Activities and Materials:**

Include all of the following:

1) Support the lesson objectives
2) Are challenging
3) Sustain student’s attention
4) Elicit a variety of thinking
5) Provide time for reflection
6) Are relevant to students’ lives
7) Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction
8) Induce student curiosity and suspense
9) Provide students with choices
10) Incorporate multimedia and technology
11) Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts
12) In addition; sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring

**Descriptors for Activities and Materials**

**Content Related Descriptors:**

1) Support the lesson objectives
2) Are challenging
3) Elicit a variety of thinking
4) Provide time for reflection
5) Are relevant to students’ lives

**Student-Centered Descriptors:**

1) Sustain student’s attention
2) Provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction
3) Induce student curiosity and suspense
4) Provide students with choices
Materials Descriptors:

1) Incorporate multimedia and technology
2) Incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts
3) In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations

When applying this indicator to a lesson, it is critical that evidence for the first descriptor exits. Therefore, this descriptor connects directly to the descriptors under Standards and Objectives. A teacher may incorporate a variety of activities and materials within a lesson, but if their use is not purposeful in supporting students in meeting the learning objective, then the purpose for their use may not be clear or appropriate.

In developing activities and materials that are challenging, it is important that they are challenging for all students as opposed to just a few. Therefore this descriptor relates closely to Teacher Knowledge of Students.

The descriptor, incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts, relates to the use of materials beyond a textbook. A teacher may use manipulatives that are provided by the curriculum tool kits, but these would still be considered resources beyond the school curriculum text. This may also include the use of photographs, novels, picture books, personal artifacts, etc.

The last descriptor under the exemplary category includes the word “sometimes.” Therefore, the expectation would not be for all of these to be included all of the time.

When beginning to develop these skills, teachers may ask the questions below as they observe a lesson or after they teach a lesson themselves.

Questions to Ask When Increasing Student Participation:

1) Student’s attention
   How will I maintain all students’ attention during the lesson? (list)
2) Student-to-student interaction
   How will I allow for meaningful student-to-student interaction? (list)
3) Student curiosity
   How will I deliberately set the conditions for student to demonstrate curiosity?
4) Choices
   How will I provide students with significant choices related to the content?
5) Creating
   How will children create and self-monitor their own learning?

After answering these questions, teachers should always ask what impact each of these will have on student achievement and what will be the evidence for this.

Example 1: Designing a Variety of Activities

A teacher assessed students and realized that they were experiencing difficulty in making inferences. Not only was this a critical reading comprehension skill, but also a skill tested on the standardized test. Her objective was: "By the end of this lesson you will be able to identify details in text and use your own experiences to develop an appropriate inference.” Next, she looked at the descriptors related to content when she began to design her lesson. She designed her lesson with several activities:
Students were to work in pairs to identify details from the text that connected to the inference question asked.

Each student would think of an experience or prior knowledge they had that connected to the text and then pair/share this with a partner.

Each student would complete a graphic organizer with this information.

Each student would write the inference and include a reflection on how the process had been supportive in making an appropriate inference.

After the activities were designed, the teacher used the descriptors to be certain that students were involved in the referenced activities.

1) Support - The activities supported the objective for students to make an inference.
2) Thinking - She determined that when students are asked to infer, they are thinking at a higher level. A question she was sure to ask was: "How did you develop your inference? Why was it appropriate?"
3) Reflection - There was time for reflection in the lesson when the students were told to reflect on how the process had supported them.
4) Relevant - By using their own experiences and/or background knowledge, the lesson became relevant to the students since they had opportunities to make connections to the text.
5) Students also had opportunities for student-to-student interaction when they paired/shared.
6) Students were provided choices for the connections they would make to the text and the supporting details they would identify that connected to the inference question.
7) Student curiosity and suspense would be provided as students would continue reading text or conducting research to learn if their inference was correct.

Example 2: Providing Students with Choices

One teacher reflected upon each lesson after school by using the questions above. She noted that consistently she could not think of many instances when students made significant choices. The following week she added two opportunities for students to make significant content-related choices: One, students could develop a summary using any media. Two, students were able to choose whether to write prose or poetry for an assignment. During her reflection, she admitted that she saw some enthusiasm expressed by several of her students who were otherwise passive. In analyzing the student work, she found that several students who normally performed on a lower level were able to show mastery of the skill when provided choices for how they would meet the objective. She then began developing other ways to provide students with choices in future lessons. She found students were able to provide evidence of mastery in a way that supported their own strengths or intelligence.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Activities and Materials
Cluster Group Learning

- Cluster time should be spent on modeling the use of materials and activities that support student success as they relate to the new learning in cluster. An expectation of an effective cluster leader is that he/she would come to cluster prepared with appropriate materials and activities that have been applied to cluster members’ students (Leader as Facilitator). By field testing strategies prior to teaching them in cluster, cluster leaders should have identified and developed the materials that are required to make the strategy successful for the students represented by cluster members. In developing these, a cluster leader should refer to the descriptors under Activities and Materials as well as the needs of the students.

- When teachers participate in cluster activities and/or are given materials to read, they should all be aligned with the cluster outcome of increasing teacher instructional proficiency to address a specific student need. The same premise is true during the development portion of cluster where the focus of the activities should be on preparing teachers to effectively teach the strategy in the classroom while utilizing all the critical attributes highlighted during the model.

Questioning

Questioning is an art form that reveals a great deal about a teacher’s effectiveness. The rubric descriptors provide a basic framework for the types of questions to ask within a lesson and how teachers should lead students in responding to questions. The descriptors for questioning can be classified into three main categories:

**Exemplary Descriptors for Questioning:**

1) Teacher questions are varied and high-quality providing a balanced mix of question types:
   - Knowledge and comprehension
   - Application and analysis
   - Creation and evaluation
2) Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.
3) A high frequency of questions is asked.
4) Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
5) Questions regularly require active responses.
6) Wait time is consistently provided.
7) The teacher calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and gender.
8) Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

**Procedural Questioning Descriptors:**
Several of the descriptors are focused on simple procedural operations that are easy to develop. These descriptors are:

1) A high frequency of questions is asked.
2) Wait time is consistently provided.
3) The teacher calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and gender.

**Example:**

It may benefit teachers trying to include these descriptors in a lesson to write students’ names on Popsicle sticks or strips of paper and pull a name to respond to questions asked. Teachers may also assign numbers to students and use a deck of playing cards to call on students by their numbers. Students may also choose classmates to call upon. These type methods help a teacher avoid repeatedly calling on the same students or calling only on volunteers who may have their hands raised. Teachers may also have students respond to a partner before answering a question aloud for the whole class. This method can provide a way to hold each student accountable for formulating a response and sharing their answer with someone else. When providing wait time for students, it is important for the teacher to label this for students so that he/she may use the opportunity to teach students how to provide wait time for one another.

**Content-Related Descriptors:**

Three descriptors listed for questioning are related to the intricate use of a variety of questions to support student learning. These indicators are:

1) Teacher questions are varied and high quality providing a balanced mix of question types:
   - Knowledge and comprehension
   - Application and analysis
   - Creation and evaluation

2) Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.
3) Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
4) Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

When a teacher effectively utilizes questions that are purposeful and coherent, then students’ responses may be utilized as a formative assessment in determining which students have mastered the learning objective. *(Standards and Objectives)*

For support in generating questions based on Bloom’s Taxonomy, refer to pages 214-216 in the Handbook. It is important to note here how the use of higher order questions will impact the evidence for the descriptors under *Thinking*.

The effective teacher does not limit the use of questions in a lesson to only teacher-generated questions, but guides students in generating questions that support their own learning. In leading students to generate their own questions, it is also important for them to have knowledge of the different question types. These can be modeled for them through the teacher’s questions and through a purposeful teaching of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

**Example**

When a teacher introduces a lesson, students may be led to complete a KWL chart. By doing this, each student has the opportunity to generate questions that he/she wants answered as the student the content being presented. Students may also
generate questions about a topic they are researching. For example, students may be writing biographies on significant figures of the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher provides specific information that must be included in the biography but also allows students to generate questions they would like to learn about the individual. Both sets of questions would guide the student’s research. By providing opportunities for students to generate questions, teachers also develop learning experiences where inquiry is valued, Motivating Students, and provide students with choices, Activities and Materials.

**Suggested Coaching Questions on Questioning**

- How do you decide on the types and frequency of questions you ask during a lesson?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher order questions during a lesson?
- How do you provide opportunities for all students to respond to your questions?
- How do you provide for wait time during a lesson?
- What is the purpose for a teacher to provide wait time?

**Cluster Group Learning**

- It is important for cluster leaders to continually question teachers on a higher level as a means of modeling the use of higher level questions. In doing this, it is also effective to have teachers identify the level on Bloom’s to which the questions align. By doing this, cluster leaders can assess members’ understanding of Bloom’s Taxonomy. (Refer to Expertise of Leader in section ??? of the Handbook.)

- When asking questions in cluster, cluster leaders also need to model the use of wait time. A cluster leader may tell members that he/she just wants them to think about their response for a few seconds before responding. Then ask the teachers how the use of the ‘think time’ or wait time supported them in formulating a response.

- Teachers may also pair/share their responses as a model for what they can do with their students in the classroom. This method also supports teachers in developing a variety of ways to require active responses.

- Just as teachers use questioning to assess student understanding, cluster leaders should ask teachers questions to build connections between the new cluster learning being modeled and teachers own students and personal instruction needs. (Expertise of Leader/ Leader as Facilitator). The cluster leader should also use questions to informally assess members’ understanding of the new learning
Academic Feedback

This indicator focuses on how teachers respond to students’ comments and questions. The descriptors address the quality of the feedback in supporting student learning as opposed to feedback that only informs students of the accurateness of their responses. Additionally, these descriptors address how a teacher uses student feedback to make adjustments in instruction.

Exemplary Descriptors for Academic Feedback:

1) Oral and written feedback are consistently academically focused, frequent, and high-quality.
2) Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review.
3) The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student’s progress, and provide individual feedback.
4) Feedback from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction.
5) Teacher engages students in giving specific and high-quality feedback to one another.

Feedback Descriptors Focused on Quality:

The checklist below provides information that helps teachers develop the ability to provide high-quality feedback. The rubric references “high quality” feedback in two descriptors (1 and 5). Without consensus on what high-quality feedback is, the rubric cannot be scored accurately. There are many instructional leaders who feel that a classroom observer should be able to “guess” what the objective for the lesson is by simply listening to a teacher’s feedback during a lesson. Such precision must be developed using the criteria below.

Checklist for Determining Quality of Feedback

• Feedback relates to the lesson objective or sub-objective.
• Feedback causes students to think.
• Feedback is specific.
• Feedback is timely.
• Feedback is varied to meet the unique needs of the students and classroom.

Descriptor one references the use of oral and written feedback. However, evidence for this descriptor may be present if the teacher consistently provides high quality oral feedback as opposed to oral and written.

Example 1:

The objective of a lesson was: “Boys and girls, today you will learn about one way to form a paragraph. We formulate a topic sentence and at least three supporting sentences. Then we end the paragraph with a summary statement.” She provided a graphic organizer after they collectively developed a topic sentence. While children wrote the supporting details independently, she provided feedback. The following
feedback was recorded:

• “Marie, very nice sentences because they include strong details.”
• “Henry, your first detail is a complete sentence. That’s just great. Look at your second detail. What can we add to make a complete sentence?”
• “Louise, if you would like more inspiration, let’s look at the story for paragraph details. Good. It’s right there. I think you will find some great material for writing details.”
• “Jamie, you have three details that will make a great paragraph, what will make a good summary statement?”

It is also important for teachers to model for students how to provide each other with high quality academic feedback.

Example 2:

Following the same lesson objective as provided in the above example. After the students have completed their writing, the teacher pairs them for the purpose of conferencing on each other’s writing. To ensure students know her expectations for the conferences, she pairs with a student and models the questions and type of feedback she would provide to the student. Within this model she explains that it is important for students to clearly clarify why an area of the writing is strong and why another needs to be strengthened. She does this by providing high quality feedback that is focused on the lesson objective of writing a topic sentence, supporting details and summary statement. Along with this model, the teacher may also include written feedback on the student’s writing that is focused on the objective.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Academic Feedback

• How do you decide on the type of feedback you provide to students?
• How do you use student feedback to make adjustments in your instruction?
• How do you engage students in providing quality feedback to one another?

Cluster Group Learning

• When modeling new learning in cluster, a cluster leader may provide specific examples of students’ comments from his/her field testing and the feedback he/she provided in response to these comments. Along with these examples, a cluster leader would need to provide the thought process or purpose he/she used in deciding on the type of feedback provided to students.
• Cluster leaders also model the use of academic feedback by providing it to cluster members when they ask questions or make comments. Cluster leaders may use paraphrasing and summarizing of members’ comments to deepen the learning for all members. When doing this, it is important for cluster leaders to label this type of feedback to ensure members make connections for how a leader’s feedback supports their own learning in cluster. Refer to Communicating Effectively pages????
During development time, teachers can work together to provide feedback to each other regarding each members’ planning and/or presentation of the strategy. Cluster leaders should be modifying their feedback to cluster members based on each members’ proficiency with the strategy and make appointments for follow-up based on these observations. (Leader as Facilitator/ Cluster Classroom Connection)

Grouping Students

This indicator deals with the instructional arrangements of the students during a given lesson. It focuses on how the students will be grouped for the instruction and activities of the lesson and how they will be held accountable for the work they are expected to complete.

Exemplary Descriptors for Grouping:

1) The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or homogenous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency.
2) All students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations.
3) All students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and individual work.
4) Instructional group composition is varied (e.g., race, gender, ability, and age) to best accomplish the goals of the lesson.
5) Instructional groups facilitate opportunities for students to set goals, reflect on, and evaluate their learning.

Structuring Learning Groups:

Indicators 2, 3 and 4 focus on structuring learning groups. For teachers learning how to implement grouping that enhances learning, these descriptors are a good place to start when planning.

When placing children into groups, the teacher must be able to assure that every student is actively engaged. This can be done by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities.

Example: Roles and Responsibilities

During an observation, a teacher placed students into learning groups. She assigned four roles to groups of four students. Unfortunately, two of the roles were so contrived that students perceived them as purposeless. The roles of “time manager” and “encourager” had no relevant responsibilities and the teacher’s expectations for these roles were not explained or modeled. When she walked around, about half the students were not engaged in the activity. The next time this teacher tried grouping, she looked at the learning objective for the lesson and identified all of the components needed for successful mastery and developed the group roles based on these components. By focusing on the learning objective, she was able to develop meaningful roles and divide the “work load” evenly. In addition, the teacher modeled the expectations for each role and provided a visual identifying the responsibilities for each individual role. This time, when she circulated among the groups, she noted full participation.
Specific examples of roles that may be assigned to group members are the following: A science teacher is having students work in groups to conduct an experiment. Each group is expected to illustrate the results of the experiment and present recorded data. There are four members in each group and the following roles are assigned: Materials Manager, Illustrator, Data Recorder, and Task Manager. Each role is clearly defined and explained by the teacher to ensure that all students understand the expectations.

### Example: Group Work Expectations and Groups and Individuals are Held Accountable

A teacher implemented group learning using centers in her classroom. She often did this but complained about the noise. When her classroom was observed, it was evident how she could increase proficiency. Children moved from one center to another when the bell rang. There was no expectation for what the students were to accomplish at the centers. At once she realized how important it was to have clear expectations and accountability for what students did in groups independently. By answering the following questions, she was able to construct reasonable outcomes for each center. She also provided feedback on student performance as well. A chart was placed at each center as well. This chart provided ongoing feedback to students about what they needed to accomplish. The teacher was able to provide valuable information to the parents as well.

### Questions to Ask When Designing Accountability

- What outcome do I expect students to accomplish by the end of each group session?
- How will I provide quality feedback on progress? By group? By individual?
- How will I record this information in a grade book and/or student record? How
- Will I use this information as a formative assessment?
- Is this work expectation appropriate for small group? Whole group? Individual?

There must be a rationale for why students are grouped together. There are a variety of grouping patterns, including:

- By heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping of ability
- By demographic balance
- By interest
- By ability to focus
- By ability to communicate
- By language acquisition levels

Regardless for how the grouping arrangements are developed, the grouping should enhance the learning for all students. The ability of a teacher to group students in this manner is directly connected to his/her knowledge of the students; their individual needs, interests, and abilities.

### Suggested Coaching Questions on Grouping

- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?
- How do you hold groups and individuals accountable for work completed within a group?
- How do you decide on the roles individuals will have when working in groups?
- How do you communicate your expectations to students for their own work and that of the group?
• How do you assess the performance of groups and individuals when it is completed in a group setting?

Cluster Group Learning

• When modeling new learning in cluster, a cluster leader can include grouping of the cluster members as a means of modeling specific descriptors from this indicator. It is important for cluster members to reflect on how the grouping arrangement impacted their own learning.
• When field testing a strategy, cluster leaders need to identify how grouping of students enhances the instruction. The identified grouping arrangement then becomes a critical attribute of the strategy. The way in which the groups need to be arranged and the purpose for the grouping arrangements need to be clearly explained during the cluster leader’s modeling of the new learning. This would also include how the cluster leader held individual students and groups accountable during field testing.
• Cluster members may also work in pairs or groups during the development of the new learning. If teachers are selecting passages as part of the development, then one member may select a passage appropriate for below grade level readers and another member may select a passage for above grade level readers then share these passages for both to use in their classrooms.

Teacher Content Knowledge

"A teacher must believe in the value and interest of his subject as a doctor believes in health." – Gilbert High

This indicator addresses the teacher’s knowledge of the content he/she is teaching as well as their ability to implement strategies to support student learning. Also addressed in this indicator is the teacher’s ability to connect the content being taught to other ideas and concepts.

Exemplary Descriptors for Teacher Content Knowledge:

• Teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches.
• Teacher regularly implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.
• The teacher regularly highlights key concepts and ideas, and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas.
• Limited content is taught in sufficient depth to allow for the development of understanding.

Example 1: Teacher highlights key concepts and connects to other powerful ideas

A teacher is conducting a lesson on immigration in the 1860’s and relates immigration from the time period to present day. News articles about immigrants and refugees are presented during class. Students select someone they know who...
has immigrated to the United States to interview. Comparisons are made between immigrants of the 1860s and immigrants of today (reasons for immigrating, countries of origin, experiences, etc.). By connecting immigration of the 1860’s to immigration of present day and having students interview immigrants and debate the impact of immigrants in their community, the teacher has highlighted key concepts and connected them to more powerful ideas.

Example 2: Teacher highlights key concepts and connects to other powerful ideas

Groups of students are studying the circulatory and respiratory systems. During their study of how the two systems function and support each other, they also study diseases of the two systems. The teacher has students utilize the information they have gained to develop plans for a healthy lifestyle which could help prevent heart attacks, lung cancer, etc. Students present their plans to other students and to the school administration. They also use the plans to develop a healthy menu for the school cafeteria.

By leading students to connect to these other ideas and concepts, a teacher provides evidence of his/her knowledge of the content being taught and ability to utilize a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to teach the content.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Teacher Content Knowledge

- How do you prepare yourself to teach (insert the specific topic taught)?
- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach (insert the specific topic being taught)?
- How do you decide on the ways in which you will connect the content being taught to more powerful ideas?
- What are some other ideas to which you could have connected during the lesson?

Cluster Group Learning

- When modeling new learning in cluster, a cluster leader needs to explain and model how she/he led students to connect other powerful ideas during the lesson. Examples of ways this can be done need to be provided for the teachers during the modeling. Then cluster members can incorporate these into their development of the new learning.
- Cluster leaders always need to display their own knowledge of the content as they model. For this reason, it is beneficial when cluster leaders are modeling a strategy targeting a reading comprehension skill to model it within a science, social studies, or math content lesson. By embedding a reading strategy within the content area, a cluster leader is able to display content knowledge, but also model how to connect to other ideas and concepts.
Teacher Knowledge of Students

This indicator deals with how well a teacher knows his/her students and their learning styles and interests. Therefore, it is closely connected to the indicator Motivating Students.

Exemplary Descriptors for Teacher Knowledge of Students:

1) Teacher practices display an understanding of each student's anticipated learning difficulties.
2) Teacher practices regularly incorporate student interests and cultural heritage.
3) Teacher regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught.

Descriptors 1 and 3 address a teacher’s ability to meet students’ learning needs. These descriptors connect closely to the descriptor, pacing is brisk, and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates under Lesson Structure and Pacing. Descriptor 2 deals with a teacher’s ability to connect the content being taught to the interests and background of the students. Therefore, these descriptors relate closely to the descriptor, the teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students under Motivating Students...

Differentiated instruction may include activities to address auditory, visual and kinesthetic learning styles or it may include providing students with choices in assignments that relate to the multiple intelligences. It may also mean that teachers provide students with extended time to complete assignments or abbreviated assignments based on student need.

Example:

During a lesson on the solar system, the teacher displays a poster of the planets, students act out the alignment of the planets and the class reads an article on one of the planets. Within this lesson, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners’ needs are addressed.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Teacher Knowledge of Students

- How do you identify the learning styles of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you identify the interests of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?

Cluster Group Learning

- When a cluster leader regularly refers to the characteristics of student work from his/her field testing and from cluster members’ presentations, he/she is able to identify and model modifications to a strategy based on the anticipated learning difficulties of students. These modifications should then be incorporated into the development of the new learning by the cluster.
Thinking

Thinking is something that should and can apply to every observation of a teacher. To assess thinking, Certified TAP Evaluators are not looking for each thinking behavior to occur in every lesson, but instead are looking for the occurrence of all behaviors over the course of multiple observations and evaluations during the school year. This may mean that one lesson has two types of thinking during an observation visit. On another visit the teacher teaches a different type, and so on. It is important to note that this indicator states over the course of multiple observations, not over the course of multiple evaluations. Therefore, the multiple observations would be the regular support provided by leadership team members in the form of team teaching and observing. When the teacher is formally evaluated, the types of thinking observed in previous lessons would impact the score assigned to this indicator.

Exemplary Descriptors for Thinking:

1) Analytical thinking where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information
2) Practical thinking where students use, apply and implement what they learn in real-world scenarios
3) Creative thinking where students create, design, imagine and suppose
4) Research-based thinking where students explore, and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems
5) The teacher provides opportunities for students to generate ideas and alternatives.
6) The teacher provides opportunities where students analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.
7) The teacher provides opportunities for students to monitor their thinking to ensure that they understand what they are learning and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using.

Descriptors 1-4 discuss the four types of thinking that TAP teachers are expected to implement regularly and consistently. These thinking types were compiled based on twenty years of research by the most prominent psychologists in America.

Descriptor 1: Analytical thinking where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information.
Most teachers focus only on analytical thinking in their classrooms. This type of thinking demands that students analyze, evaluate, and explain phenomena. Analyzing, evaluating, and explaining information is a skill that applies to all disciplines and is critical for an informed and educated society.

**Example 1: Analytical Thinking**

In language arts a class is reading *Charlotte’s Web*. Through a Venn Diagram, the class compares and contrasts Wilbur’s personality traits with those of Charlotte. Next, the teacher asks the students to analyze the text and find specific words that provide evidence of the character traits the child listed. For the final part of this assignment, the teacher asks students to explain why Charlotte chose to help Wilbur and what each child would do if he or she were Charlotte.

**Example 2: Analytical Thinking**

Students are studying a specific artist’s work. They are asked to observe a painting and identify one thing in the painting or element of the painting that could be removed that would not alter the artist’s intent. Students may also be asked to explain what the painting reveals about the artists’ attitude towards life, war, nature, etc.

**Descriptor 2: Practical thinking where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-world scenarios.**

Many students often do not see the connections between what they learn in school and how they can use this knowledge in the real world. Teachers who integrate practical thinking into their teaching, design learning activities where students are forced to use and apply concepts and ideas that they learn. In this way, this descriptor connects to the descriptor; the teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students under *Motivating Students*.

**Example 1: Practical Thinking**

A class is working on measurement. Often teachers have students measure various objects in the room. While this has children apply the concept of measurement, the utility and relevance of how measurement works in the real world is not clear. The teacher informs students that they will be building tree and plant boxes throughout the school. These planters will be various shapes and sizes and will require students to not only measure and cut different pieces of wood to build them, but also to estimate the sizes of the correct plants and bushes to put in them.

**Example 2: Practical Thinking**

A group of students is fed up with the cafeteria food and they have decided to do something about it. First, they research what the necessary requirements are for a healthy lunch. Next, they design a menu for two weeks. Finally, they create the shopping list and pricing list to ensure that the lunches they are requesting are affordable. After working through each of these issues, the students present their
menu, shopping list, and pricing list to the school board. Their proposal is negotiated and some items on the menu change.

Descriptor 3: Creative thinking where students create, design, imagine, and suppose.

Children have wonderful imaginations and love to create, design, and invent things. In school, however, they are often told to follow strict rules, adhere to criteria and provide the one correct answer, not necessarily the most creative one. By teaching students to create, design, and imagine, teachers prepare students for the flexible and creative thinking they will need to exercise later in life.

Examples: Create and Design

- Design a food chain with imaginary animals. Provide a rationale for where each animal fits.
- Create a survey to determine the favorite food of students in your school.
- Design a new playground for the school and make sure your drawing is to scale.
- Rewrite the Bill of Rights.
- Create a classroom constitution.
- Create a three-dimensional map of your state.
- Suppose George Washington was never born. Write about how America might be today without him.
- Create a song or develop new words for an existing melody.
- Create a football or basketball play during a physical education class.

Descriptor 4: Research-based thinking where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.

In the midst of the information age, students need to know not only how to research to find information, but also how to review a variety of ideas and come to solutions that are well-supported and make sense.

Examples: Research-Based Thinking

- Research six different professions and describe the benefits and pitfalls of each.
- Research three sources of alternative energy and, based on your analysis of each, recommend the most fruitful source.
• Research the staple foods from countries in three different continents, and describe why those foods are so pervasive.

**Example: Research-Based Thinking, Analytical Thinking and Practical Thinking**

During a study of the Jim Crow Laws, students also conduct a study of Civil Rights laws. They then compare and contrast the two different groups of laws identifying strengths and weaknesses. After comparing and contrasting the laws, they debate the need for present laws to ensure all citizens have equal rights and create the wording for these laws.

**Descriptor 5: The teacher provides opportunities for students to generate ideas and alternatives.**

One element of sound thinking and creativity is the ability to generate many ideas and consider many alternatives and possibilities. This type of thinking is rarely employed in classrooms, but there are some simple ways to provide for students to generate lots of ideas and consider alternatives in nearly every subject.

**Example: Generate Ideas**

Before beginning a unit on deserts, a teacher asks students to independently list on a sheet of paper all the desert plants, animals, and attributes of the desert that they can identify.

**Example: Generate Alternatives**

When solving a fraction problem, a math teacher asks students to generate different ways to solve the problem and different ways to represent their answers.

**Example: Generate Ideas and Alternatives**

A science teacher has students conduct experiments about which variables lead to maximum plant growth. One group tests different types of light, one tests different types of liquids, one tests different types of soil, and one combines what student’s hypothesize to be the best of each. In this example, students not only generate ideas about which variables to test, but also consider many alternative explanations.
Descriptor 6: The teacher provides opportunities where students analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.

This descriptor, much like Descriptor 5, applies to many disciplines. As children get older, if they do not learn to consider other peoples’ points of view and are not provided with opportunities to look at problems from several perspectives, their thinking is severely restricted. Getting students to consider multiple perspectives provides them opportunities to learn how those different than themselves may view problems and solutions.

Examples: Multiple Perspectives and Viewpoints

- A social studies class studies the Civil War by reading letters from soldiers from the North and South.
- An art class studies predominant symbols in Western art and Eastern art and compares and contrasts the two art forms.
- A physical education and math class work together to conduct a survey on children's favorite sports, then analyzes the data by grade level, gender, and race. They also discuss the factors affecting the data to further develop their understanding of the similarities and differences between grade levels, gender, and race.

Descriptor 7: The teacher provides opportunities for students to monitor their thinking to ensure that they understand what they are learning and that they are aware of the learning strategies they are using.

Research has shown that monitoring and thinking about one’s thinking leads to better academic performance, behavior, and on-task engagement. There are many ways in which teachers can be explicit about reminding children what learning strategy to use, when to use it, and how students can begin to use it on their own.

Example: Monitoring Thinking

When reading, a teacher stops at critical points in the passage and reminds students that good readers summarize what they have read. She models how to summarize by modeling her own thinking and later calls on students to engage in this behavior. Over the course of the year, the teacher models her thinking out loud for students. As the teacher reads, she says, “I've read a lot here. I better stop to summarize so I can remember and use what I am learning.”

The teacher makes her thinking explicit in the same way when she clarifies words.
she does not understand. She reminds students as they read that good readers clarify words that they do not know or understand. As she reads, she stops and says to herself, “I don’t understand this word, let me look for context clues, let me ask a partner, let me go to the dictionary, or let me make a note of it and return to it later.”

**FOR SUGGESTED COACHING QUESTIONS SEE QUESTIONS AT THE END OF PROBLEM SOLVING**

**Cluster Group Learning**

During modeling of a strategy, the cluster leader should identify the types of thinking he/she taught when implementing the strategy during field testing. For example, a cluster leader may be modeling the use of a Venn diagram to increase student achievement in comparing and contrasting. During the modeling of the strategy, the cluster leader should make reference to how the strategy teaches analytical thinking.

**Problem Solving**

Developing multiple skills in problem solving enriches the learner’s ability to manage complex tasks and higher levels of learning. By providing opportunities for students to practice many different approaches to solving problems, the teacher empowers the student with an important life skill. The indicator addresses the following problem solving types:

1) Abstraction  
2) Categorization  
3) Drawing Conclusions  
4) Predicting Outcomes  
5) Observing and Experimenting  
6) Justifying Solutions  
7) Improving Solutions  
8) Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information  
9) Generating Ideas  
10) Creating and Designing

For a teacher to receive an exemplary score in problem solving, he/she must implement activities that teach and reinforce 6 or more of the problem solving types over the course of multiple observations. It is important to note, that this indicator states over the course of multiple observations, not over the course of multiple evaluations. Therefore, the multiple observations would be the regular support provided by leadership team members in the form of team teaching and observing. When the teacher is formally evaluated, the types of problem solving activities observed in previous lessons would impact the score assigned to this indicator.

**Descriptor 1: Abstraction**

Abstraction is the process of leaving out of consideration one or more properties of a complex object so as to attend to others. When the mind considers the form of a tree by itself, or the color of the leaves as separate from their size or figure, the act is called
abstraction. This is true as well when the mind considers whiteness, softness, virtue, and existence, as separate from any particular objects.

Abstraction is also applied when students take the key components or ideas occurring across given examples and use that idea to solve a new problem.

**Example: Abstraction**

After reading *Rumplestiltskin, Hansel and Gretel,* and *Little Red Riding Hood,* students will create a list of four qualities that define “fairytalesness.”

**Descriptor 2: Categorization**

Students analyze information, classify it and sort it into meaningful categories.

**Example 1: Categorization**

Students develop categories in which to sort vocabulary words. The categories may be common meanings, spelling patterns, parts of speech, etc.

**Example 2: Categorization**

In math, students are studying polygons. They will first define the essential characteristics of a polygon, and then sort the following list into examples and non-examples of polygons. Essential characteristics are “closed, plane figure, straight sides, more than 2 sides, 2-dimensional, and made of line segments.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circle</th>
<th>Cone</th>
<th>Cube</th>
<th>Cylinder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heptagon</td>
<td>Hexagon</td>
<td>Parallelogram</td>
<td>Pentagon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrilateral</td>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>Rectangle</td>
<td>Rhombus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sphere</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td>Trapezoid</td>
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</tbody>
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**Descriptor 3: Drawing Conclusions**

Students draw conclusions based on data presented to them in many forms, viewpoints, perspectives, and quality.

De Bono (1994) states that there are three levels of conclusions at which the mind can arrive:

1) A specific answer, idea or opinion
2) A full harvesting of all that has been achieved, including, for example, a listing of ideas considered
3) An objective look at the “thinking” that has been used

**Example: Drawing Conclusions**

Examples of each of the three levels are represented below:
After reading and discussing the events leading up to the Boston Tea Party, students will:

1. Write a paragraph expressing which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection.
2. Debate, then decide which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection, then prepare a written summary with careful notes of all major points.
3. After hearing debate and deciding which one event had the greatest impact on causing this insurrection, students will write a reflective paragraph as to the process they went through in making their final decision.

**Example 2: Drawing Conclusion**

Student teams shop for the best buy on candy at the local grocery. Students gather prices, size/weight of packages and desirability of the candy. Each team computes price per ounce/gram and where each falls on a 1-10 desirability list with 10 the most desirable. They then analyze their data and determine which candy is the best buy for their team and provide evidence for their choice. This activity also requires students to justify a solution which is another descriptor under Problem Solving.

**Descriptor 4: Predicting Outcomes**

Students make predictions, and then test the validity of those predictions.

**Example: Predicting**

Students are reading A Rat’s Tale, by Tor Seidler, about two young rats from different socio-economic levels, whose true love must endure all kinds of adventures and challenges. When Montague decides to save the wharf, students predict and record in their reading journals some possible scenes that may unfold in the story and whether Montague will be successful.

**Descriptor 5: Observing and Experimenting**

Children observe, record, code, and measure. Children develop hypotheses, instruments, then collect and analyze data.

**Example: Observing and Experimenting**

After a study of yearly weather patterns, students will keep daily weather records for one month, noting the date, type of weather, temperature, and amount of precipitation. They will create their own rain gauges to measure the precipitation.

At the end of the month they will determine the median and mean for temperature and precipitation. Using this data and their knowledge of yearly weather patterns,
they will hypothesize whether the medians and means for the next month will be the same, higher or lower. At the end of the second month, students will again analyze their data, compare to the previous month, and either confirm or refute their hypotheses.

Descriptor 6: Justifying Solutions

Children analyze several possible solutions, select in their opinion the best solution, and justify why that solution is best and why other solutions are less adequate.

Example 1: Justifying Solution

After studying the Civil War, students will write editorial articles supporting the Confederate or Union stand.

Example 2: Justifying Solution

Students will solve math problems and prove to a partner that their answers are correct. Here is one example:

“If you were to construct a 6 x 6 checkered square, how many total squares would there be?” (Hint: How many 1 x 1 squares, 2 x 2 squares, 3 x 3 squares are present?)

Descriptor 7: Improving Solutions

Children are given a solution to a problem, and asked to suggest methods for improving it.

Example 1: Improving Solutions

Students have read a series of Nate the Great mysteries. There is a discussion of weak and strong endings. Pairs of students choose one to reread together what they feel has a weak ending. Together they rewrite the ending to give a better explanation that solves the mystery.

Example 2: Improving Solutions

Students studying World War II may choose a specific battle and develop ways it could have been more effectively planned by the losing side to change the outcome.
Descriptor 8: Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information

Students are given relevant and irrelevant information needed to solve a problem. They identify relevant information and use that information to solve a problem.

Example 1: Identifying Relevant or Irrelevant Information

Students reread the fairytale, *Goldilocks*. They are then asked to fill in a T chart with evidence from the story that is relevant/irrelevant to whether or not Goldilocks is a criminal and should be arrested. They then render their verdict.

| Evidence of Guilt | Irrelevant Evidence |

Example 2: Identifying Relevant and Irrelevant Information

When solving word problems in math, students identify information that is necessary and unnecessary to use in developing their solution.

Descriptor 9: Generating Ideas

Children are given ill-defined problems and taught to look for analogies, to brainstorm, and generate idea lists, and create representations to come up with viable solutions.

Example: Generating Ideas

Students are in small groups and are presented with the following information after the study of the geography of the Southwest U.S. and the water cycle in science: "It is the year 2010. The Colorado River, which in the past has been a major source of water to Southern California, has dried up. How can we replace this critical source of water?"

Students will generate as many possible solutions as they can, order them from most effective to least, and provide reasoning for deciding which would be their first and last choices.

Descriptor 10: Creating and Designing


Children are asked to create or design a product, experiment, or problem for another student to solve or evaluate (e.g. video, cartoon strip, presentation, software application, etc.).

**Example 1: Creating and Designing**

Students read *The Legend of Jimmy Spoon* by Kristina Gregory. Since this book lacks a map, students will create one showing the locations Jimmy visits with his adopted Shoshone tribe. They can begin with a generic map, which includes Utah, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming to trace Jimmy’s travels throughout the book.

**Example 2: Creating and Designing**

Students create tutorials in PowerPoint to teach younger students basic information about the continents. Presentations must be at their partner’s reading level and include a mini quiz at the end.

**Suggested Coaching Questions on Thinking and Problem Solving**

- How do you plan for activities and/or assignments that teach students different types of thinking or problem solving?
- Ask teachers to reflect on the specific activities and/or assignments utilized within the lesson and then identify the type of thinking and/or problem solving each taught. This type of reflection will provide a means for assessing a teacher’s understanding of analytical, practical and research-based thinking and the types of problem solving referenced under this indicator.

**Cluster Group Learning**

During modeling of a strategy, the cluster leader should identify the types of problem solving he/she taught when implementing the strategy during field testing. For example, a cluster leader may be modeling a strategy to support students in solving mathematical word problems. The new learning maybe a chunk of the strategy in which students identify important information they will need to answer the question. The cluster leader would then connect for the teachers how this chunk of the strategy is an example of identifying relevant/irrelevant information under this indicator.
This section includes resources and information on the four areas of the Teaching Standards under The Learning Environment:

1) Expectations
2) Managing Student Behavior
3) Environment
4) Respectful Culture

**Expectations**

**Exemplary Descriptors for Expectations:**

1) Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student.
2) Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes.
3) Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success.
4) Students take initiative and follow through with their own work.
5) Teacher optimizes instructional time, teaches more material, and demands better performance from every student.

The descriptors under this indicator directly connect to descriptors on the Implementing Instruction Rubric. For a teacher to include the descriptors under Expectations, he/she must have knowledge of the students he/she is teaching. Differentiated instruction methods that are demanding for every student and create opportunities for all students to experience success can only be implemented when a teacher’s knowledge of students is developed and utilized during instruction. When a teacher sets high and demanding expectations for every student, he/she is also able to develop and/or select activities and materials that are challenging. The second descriptor connects to Motivating Students. When a teacher regularly reinforces and rewards efforts, students will be encouraged to learn from their mistakes and take risks. A teacher must be able to create a safe learning environment in which student’s efforts are reinforced and valued in order for students to experience success. For a teacher to optimize instructional time, he/she must be able to implement lessons that include appropriate lesson structure and pacing for students who progress at different learning rates. For additional explanation of these indicators, refer to the pages in this handbook that address each of the indicators from the Implementing Instruction Rubric.

**Managing Student Behavior**

**Exemplary Descriptors for Student Behavior:**

1) Students are consistently well-behaved and on task.
2) Teacher and students establish clear rules for learning and behavior.
3) The teacher uses several techniques such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences to maintain appropriate student behavior.
4) The teacher overlooks inconsequential behavior.
5) The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class.
6) The teacher attends to disruptions quickly and firmly.
Managing student behavior has generated a huge proliferation of books and workshops. A good Web site for basic tips and information is Adprima at www.adprima.com/managing.htm. LEARN North Carolina also has great suggestions on classroom management at http://www.learnnc.org/support/nt-classman.

Timely and effective management of student behavior is critical for effective instruction to take place within a classroom. Descriptors under Standards and Objectives and Presenting Instructional Content both address a teacher’s modeling of clear expectations for students. While these indicators focus on instruction, expectations must also be clearly modeled for student behavior for effective instruction to occur that increases student achievement. For a teacher to manage student behavior effectively, he/she must not only model the expectations but have knowledge of the students he/she is teaching. Teachers must be aware of and practice a variety of techniques to maintain appropriate behavior which are dependent upon having knowledge of individual student’s needs. Teachers must also know students’ interests in order to motivate them to change inappropriate behaviors. Therefore, this indicator is also connected to Motivating Students.

Environment

Exemplary Descriptors for Environment:

The classroom:

1) Welcomes all members and guests
2) Is organized and understandable to all students
3) Supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible
4) Displays student work that frequently changes
5) Is arranged to promote individual and group learning

This indicator deals with the learning environment of the classroom including the physical arrangement of the furniture and availability of supplies for students to utilize. When supplies, equipment and resources are easily and readily accessible then the descriptor, routines for distributing materials are efficient under Lesson Structure and Pacing, can be met.

LEARN North Carolina has a great section on tips for creating a positive physical environment. The following checklist from the site can be used for self-evaluation of a classroom’s environment.

- Various areas of the classroom are created for use in a variety of activities.
- Desks or general seating is arranged so that the teachers can easily get to each student.
- The lighting in the room is adequate.
- The room temperature is generally moderate to cool. Warm classrooms lead students to be more lethargic, inattentive, and consequently bored and disruptive.
- The entrance to your room does not cause distractions to students during lessons.
- There is a place in your classroom, away from the rest of the class, where you can have a private conversation or give a private reprimand to an individual student.
- The blackboard is visible to all students during lessons and is clean and uncluttered.
- Bulletin boards are attractive and not cluttered with “old work.”
- The room has just the amount of furniture that is functional and does not contain useless or nonessential furnishings.
- The seating arrangement is designed in an orderly way so that the organization of the seats helps the students to feel more organized.
- Study carrels are used only in conjunction with other types of seating arrangements.
• Students are seated far enough apart so that innocent moves by students don’t distract other students.
• Seats are arranged in such a way as to reduce traffic distractions. For example, as students get up to go to the bathroom or pencil sharpener, they do not overly distract students they pass.
• Make sure that students have assigned seats, and don’t allow them to constantly change their seats.

Suggested Coaching Questions on Classroom Environment

• Is the room welcoming? What evidence is there that indicates that it is?
• Is it conducive to student independence; e.g. can they get their own paper? Is the pencil sharpener located in a logical place?
• Is a variety of student work posted on the bulletin boards, or just the best?
• Is the room arranged to promote individual and group work? Can the classroom accommodate different grouping patterns?
• Is the information students need posted so they can use it? E.g. the standards, the goals for the day, the schedule/agenda.
• What are the biggest challenges to having your classroom set up as you would like?
• What might be some solutions?
• How do you plan and rotate the work on your bulletin boards so that all students have an opportunity to have their work displayed?

Respectful Culture

Exemplary Descriptors for Respectful Culture:

• Teacher-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect for one another.
• Students’ exhibit caring and respect for one another.
• Teacher seeks out and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students.
• Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom.

Creating a positive classroom climate begins with showing respect to one another. Teachers most often set this in motion when they develop a set of collaborative ground rules for their classrooms and then model these for the students on a regular basis.

Teacher non-verbal cues that indicate respect and interest are:

• Tone of voice
• Eye contact
• Affirmative head nods
• Smiles
• Wait time
• Proximity to student

Suggested Coaching Questions on Respectful Culture

• Are the students empowered to make decisions?
• Are they are interdependent?
• Do they have opportunities to collaborate?
Part B: Post-Conference Plan

While the TAP Instructional rubrics are used to evaluate teachers’ lesson planning and instruction, their primary purpose is to provide the basis of support teachers receive for their own professional growth. This support should be provided in numerous ways from members of the leadership team including the modeling of specific indicators in cluster and in teachers’ classrooms and the post conference. Modeling of the indicators in cluster was previously addressed in Part A of this section. The post-conference will be addressed in this part of Section IV.

The purpose of the post-conference is to provide teachers opportunities to self-reflect on their lessons with guidance and support from the leadership team member who conducted the evaluation. This guidance should be provided through the use of leading questions by the evaluator along with the identification of an area of reinforcement (relative strength of the lesson) and an area of refinement (area in which the leadership team member needs to help the teacher improve). Therefore, the focus of the post-conference is on two indicators or descriptors from the rubric as opposed to multiple areas. By focusing on just two areas, teachers have the opportunity to segment their own learning with support from a master or mentor teacher. Examples of coaching questions corresponding to each indicator on the rubrics can be found in Part A of this section.

When choosing an area of reinforcement and refinement from the instructional rubric, members of the leadership team should ask themselves several guiding questions to ensure that a teacher’s professional growth will have the maximum impact on the achievement of his/her own students.

Hints and Questions for Choosing Reinforcement and Refinement Objectives:

Suggestions

1) Which areas on the instructional rubric received the highest scores (reinforcements) and the lowest scores (refinements)?
2) Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on student achievement?
3) Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on other areas of the rubric?
4) In which area will the teacher have the most potential for growth? For example, with new teachers it might be better to focus on developing objectives and sub-objectives instead of improving a teacher’s ability to teach problem solving.
5) Make sure that the reinforcement is not directly related to the refinement. The reason is that if you choose a refinement that is directly related to the reinforcement, it would be like saying, “You look great, but your clothes are ugly.”
6) Choose a refinement area for which you have sufficient and specific evidence from the lesson to support why the teacher needs to work in this area.
7) Select refinement topics with which you have personal knowledge and teaching experience. There is nothing worse than telling a teacher they need to alter their practice and then not being able to provide specific examples for how this can be done or modeling these examples for them.

Once the areas of reinforcement and refinement have been selected, then the post-conference is developed. Below is a format for developing an effective post-conference. It is important to note that a post-conference does not begin with a presentation of the scores, but with coaching questions which through reflection lead to the identification of the areas of reinforcement and refinement.

### Instructional Post–Conference Plan

#### Conference Introduction/Greeting:

**Greeting/Set the tone.** This time should be used to put the teacher at ease.

**Establish the length of the conference (approximately 40 minutes).** Ensure the teacher that you respect his/her time and have set a limit for the conference.

**Review conference process.** Review the format for the conference with the teacher so he/she knows what to expect. Example: *Good afternoon, it was great for me to get to visit your classroom today and observe your lesson. Our purpose in meeting today is for professional growth. We will spend time discussing your lesson with a focus on your instruction and how the students were involved with the lesson. The ultimate goal will be to develop ideas on how to enhance student achievement.*

**Ask a general impression question (e.g., “How do you think the lesson went?”).** This allows the teacher to begin the post-conference by self reflecting on his/her lesson.

#### Reinforcement Plan

**Reinforcement objective:** Use specific language from the rubric to develop the objective. Example: *By the end of the conference, the teacher will be able to explain how she plans for the types and frequency of questions that she asks during a lesson. This objective include specific language from the indicator, Questioning.*

**Self–reflection question:** Prompt teacher to talk about what you want to reinforce. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric which can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of reinforcement as it relates to the lesson. Example: *When you plan a lesson, how do you decide on the type and frequency of questions that you will ask? (Refer to part A of this section for additional examples of coaching questions.)*

**Identify specific examples from script about what teacher did relatively well.** It is critical that the leadership team member leading the post-conference provides specific examples for the lesson of when the teacher incorporated descriptors from the indicator being reinforced. Example: *You asked a variety of questions throughout the lesson to check for student understanding. You asked numerous questions on the knowledge and comprehension level that led students to review previous learning as they identified the elements of a pictograph*
and defined mean, mode, median, and range. You also asked them to define vocabulary within the lesson’s aim which allowed you to restate the aim using their response. As you progressed through the lesson, you continually asked students to explain how they arrived at their answers and to explain their classmates’ responses. This type of questioning moves students to a deeper understanding of the content being taught as they must justify their thinking. You also asked questions that required students to evaluate the purpose and advantages for using a pictograph.

**Recommend action to continue practice.** Encourage the teacher to continue including descriptors from the reinforced indicator in his/her future lessons. Example: Continue to incorporate a variety of questions in your lessons that are purposeful, coherent, and require students to think beyond the knowledge and comprehension level. This type of questioning can lead students to a deeper understanding of the content and provide opportunities for them to internalize the learning.

**Elicit feedback to explain why skill is critical to student learning.** Use questioning to lead the teacher to reflect on the importance of including this indicator in his/her lessons and how the teacher can continue to strengthen this area. Example: How can you model your questions in such a way to lead students in developing questions themselves? Why is it important for students to generate questions? How can this lead to more self-directed learning that positively impacts student achievement?

**Refinement Plan**

**Refinement objective.** Use specific language from the rubric to develop the objective. Example: By the end of the conference, the teacher will be able to explain how she plans for the pacing of a lesson that provides sufficient time for each segment and provides for a clear closure. This objective includes specific language from the indicator, Lesson Structure and Pacing.

**Self-reflection:** Ask a specific question to prompt teacher to talk about what you want to him or her to improve. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric which can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of refinement as it relates to the lesson. Example: When developing lessons, how do you decide on the pacing of the lesson so sufficient time is allocated for each segment? (Refer to part A of this section for additional examples of coaching questions.)

**Identify specific examples from script about what to refine with a model of concrete suggestions for how to improve.** It is critical that the leadership team member leading the post-conference provides specific examples from the lesson to support the indicator being refined. This is the most important element of the plan because it models a strong example and labels why it is a strong example. This provides support for the teacher as they apply the model to future lessons. Example: You began the lesson with an explanation of the lesson’s aim and an overview of the lesson. Modeling for students how to analyze a pictograph followed and then students were to work in groups to read a pictograph and complete questions on a worksheet. You mentioned earlier that you wanted students to be able to work in groups and then report their findings. However, there was not sufficient time for this to occur during the lesson. As you modeled how to analyze a pictograph, students could have worked with their group members to answer your questions prior to you providing the answer then they could have reported to the class their findings. This would have still allowed you to model, but would have also allowed students to work together to
analyze the pictograph. For students that may not have required this review, they could have worked independently in a group to analyze their own pictograph while the rest of the class participated in your modeling. This would have also allowed you to differentiate the pacing of the lesson to provide for students who progress at different learning rates. This lesson could also have been segmented into two different lessons. Your modeling with class participation could have been one lesson and then the group activity could have been the next day’s lesson. This type of segmenting would also have provided sufficient time for more students to master the lesson’s objective and for you to provide a clear closure based on the lesson’s aim along with your evaluation question.

**Guided practice:** Using the model and labeling of indicators or descriptors as a guide, question the teacher for how he/she can further improve this lesson or future lessons.  
**Example:** In reflecting on your lesson, identify ways you could further improve the pacing of your lesson or future lessons. How does the pacing of a lesson impact student achievement?

**Closing statement and/or question; then share the performance ratings.**  
**Example:** As you think about we discussed today, how will what you learned impact the lessons you plan and teach in the future?

To provide additional guidance in developing an effective post-conference, leadership team members should refer to the rubric utilized in scoring a Conference Plan.  
**Note:** An average score of 3 is required for leadership team members to receive certification as TAP Evaluators.

### Conferencing Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Reinforcement Objective** | • Reinforcement objective identifies the standard where the teacher is most accomplished, utilizes language from the Implementing Instruction standard, and includes an action to encourage the teacher to better understand this strength. | • Reinforcement objective identifies a standard where the teacher is proficient, utilizes some language in the Implementing Instruction standard, and encourages the teacher to continue implementing this practice. | • Reinforcement objective identifies a standard where the teacher is not proficient.  
• Reinforcement objective is ambiguous. |
| **Refinement Objective**    | • Refinement objective identifies the major area of weakness, and includes a course of action to correct it.  
• Refinement objective is unambiguous, explicit, and utilizes the language in the Implementing Instruction standard. | • Refinement objective identifies an area of weakness and includes an observable behavior to correct it.  
• Refinement objective utilizes the language in the standard. | • Refinement objective does not address a needed area of improvement.  
• Refinement objective is ambiguous. |
| **Reinforcement Self Analysis Questions** | • Open-ended questions that focus on the reinforcement objective  
• Questions use language explicitly tied to the | • Question focuses on the reinforcement objective  
• Questions use some language from the Implementing Instruction Standard to be reinforced. | • Are not well focused on the reinforcement objective.  
• Are not well connected to Implementing Instruction Standards language. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Refinement Self Analysis Questions</strong></th>
<th><strong>Exemplary (5)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Proficient (3)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unsatisfactory (1)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementing Instruction Standard to be reinforced.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Open-ended questions that focus on the refinement objective</strong></td>
<td><strong>Question focuses on the refinement objective</strong></td>
<td><strong>Are not well focused on the refinement objective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Questions use language explicitly tied to the Implementing Instruction Standard to be refined.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Questions use some language from the Implementing Instruction Standard to be refined.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do not provide language from the Implementing Instruction Standards.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reinforcement Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reinforcement plan clearly labels the teacher’s major strength, and explicitly communicates his or her strength by referring to specific language in the performance standard and integrating specific examples from the teacher’s observed practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reinforcement plan identifies the teacher’s strength, and communicates his or her strength by providing some examples from the teacher’s observed practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reinforcement plan identifies an incorrect area of strength.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reinforcement plan recommends the teacher continue the effective practice, and elicits feedback from the teacher to explain why the skill is critical to student learning.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reinforcement plan recommends the teacher continue the effective practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language does not reference the performance standard the teacher excels in. Examples from the teacher’s practice to support the plan are incomplete.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refinement Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refinement plan labels the standard where the teacher needs the most improvement. The plan refers to specific language in the performance standard, and integrates specific examples from the teachers observed practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refinement plan labels an appropriate standard where the teacher needs improvement. The plan refers to some examples collected from the teacher’s observed practice.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refinement plan identifies an incorrect area of weakness.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Refinement plan includes well-thought out suggestions, and a concrete model for how the teacher can improve in the identified skill.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refinement plan includes a relevant model for how the teacher can improve in the identified skill.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language does not reference the standard to improve on, or examples from the teacher’s practice.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Opportunities for guided practice are relevant, and concisely communicated.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opportunities for guided practice provided.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The model provided is vague and incomplete.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions:

1) Analyze the following examples of cluster outcomes. Using the information from the training and the STEPS for Effective Learning, identify relative strengths and weaknesses of each. Ask:

- What are the teachers learning? and
- What change in student learning will you be able to observe this week as a result of this cluster

2) As time permits, go back and make improvements as needed.

By the end of the meeting the following should be accomplished:

1) By the end of the meeting, the teachers will develop the So What? strategy for immediate implementation using their content area text.

2) By the end of the meeting, the teachers will research new ways to record student growth in reading comprehension aligned to standards.

3) Teachers will analyze and reflect on how they applied the text-to-text strategy in their classrooms last week.

4) By the end of the meeting, a lesson using the visualization strategy for improving students’ predictions will be collaboratively constructed and subsequently taught during the following week while master teachers observe.

5) By the end of the meeting, teachers will develop inter-rater reliability by scoring the district writing assessments.

6) Members will develop a class profile based on the mid-year writing assessment and determine the top three areas of instructional need.

7) By the end of the meeting, teachers will be able to develop word sorts that are used to increase word recognition and contextual meaning to implement in a lesson this week.

8) Teachers will experience a modeled problem-solving lesson using a specific differentiated strategy that includes all students.

9) By the end of the meeting, teachers will be able to identify the various levels of questions using Bloom’s Taxonomy.
10) By the end of the meeting, teachers will develop lesson objectives and ways to “explicitly communicate” them to students.

11) By the end of the meeting, teachers will identify how the “during-reading” strategy modeled by the mentor teacher could be used in their classrooms while the mentor or master observe and provide feedback.

12) By the end of the meeting, a pre-reading strategy (Probable Passage) will be modeled and developed by teachers to improve students’ ability to identify the main idea as measured by criteria presented during cluster.

STEPS for Effective Learning

Please see next page.
| **Identify a Problem or Need** | • What data shows the highest priority student need?  
• What does the disaggregated data tell us about the learning needs of the sub groups of students?  
• Have you identified a \textit{SPECIFIC} need?  
• What are the new strategies that the teacher will implement clearly connected to the student outcomes?  
• How will you measure pre/post to show direct relationship? |
| **Obtain New Learning, Strategies or Techniques** | • Where has the strategy been implemented successfully resulting in increased student growth?  
• What does the teacher \textit{have} to do \textit{differently} as a result of this strategy that makes a clear connection between teacher and student deficits?  
• What resources do we have in this school or district that can help us choose the most effective instructional strategies to address our goals?  
• What theory, knowledge and skills does staff need to close the gap between current practice & new instructional strategies? |
| **Develop the New Learning with Support in the Classroom** | • What are teachers’ current competencies?  
• Who has the expertise to best model this strategy which would lead others to a deeper understanding of the strategy?  
• What type of master/mentor teacher assistance is required for each career teacher?  
• How much of the strategy development could begin in cluster group?  
• How much should continue into the classroom for accurate learning and application?  
• After the interventions, what is the evidence concerning the teacher’s ability to correctly apply the strategy in the classroom? |
| **Apply the New Learning in the Classroom** | • How will you ensure that the new strategy and new learning is being applied accurately?  
• How will you plan for further development of the skill during career teacher application?  
• How is student work used as a measure of formative assessment for each strategy? |
| **Evaluate the Impact on Student Performance** | • What indicators or evidence will you use to determine if teacher learning has resulted in increased student performance of the desired goal?  
• What specific causal relationship can you identify between the strategies and student growth?  
• Are there other factors which could have resulted in a change? |
School Plan:

School Goal

Based on 2004 – 2005 state English Language Arts test results:

- Grade 4 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 17% proficient to 20% proficient, 35% Basic to 45% Basic, and 45 % Below Basic will decrease to 35%.
- Grade 5 students will increase from 1 % advanced to 3 % advanced, 5% proficient to 8 % proficient, 38% basic to 48% basic, and 56% Below Basic will decrease to 46% Below Basic.
- Grade 6 students will increase from 3% advanced to 5% advanced, 13% proficient to 16 % proficient, 38% basic to 46 % basic, and 56 % Below Basic will decrease to 48 % Below Basic.

All students will increase their scores 105 scale score points. A year’s growth is represented by 100 points and 5 points represents ½ of another proficiency level. Goal is based on high stakes test and includes increase in performance levels for all grades and growth for all students.

Yearly Cluster Goal

By May 2005, all students will improve performance on the benchmark ELA test by at least 10%, which is one performance level, and students performing at the highest level will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching main idea, supporting details and the writing process. Goal is aligned to school goal and is measured by benchmark test. Goal identifies specific areas of English Language Arts based on student needs (Begin 8/23/04)

CYCLE 1 GOAL

By the end of the cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least 10%, which is one performance level, on the teacher made pre-to-post reading assessment and students performing at the highest levels will maintain their scores due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching main idea and supporting details. Goal is aligned to school goal and includes growth for all students. Goal is based on specific areas of writing based on student need.

Main Idea Pre–test

- 45 out of 103 5th grade students scored 4 out of 8 or below on the main idea pre-test. What are scores for other students and scores? Consider reporting all students’ scores to provide a complete analysis of student data.

Instructional Strategies

- “Hand Strategy” for the classroom, resulting in students’ identifying main idea and supporting details in the classroom.
- “Questioning Strategy” with the “Wanted” finger of the “Hand strategy” to identify the main idea of a given text
- Thinking (metacognition) strategy of the “but” finger of the “Hand Strategy” for the classroom, resulting in students’ identifying main idea and supporting details in the classroom
• Thinking (metacognition) strategy using the five fingers of the “Hand Strategy” for the classroom, resulting in students’ identifying main idea and supporting details in the classroom
• By the end of the Cluster meeting, teachers will develop a lesson using the “Read and Think” (metacognition) strategy for the classroom,
• By the end of the Cluster meeting, teachers will develop a lesson using the “Bean Bag” (metacognition) strategy for the classroom, resulting in students’ identifying main idea and supporting details in the classroom.

Post-test

• 80 out of 103 5th grade students made gains from the pre to post assessment. What are specific scores? What were the scores of the other 23 students? Consider reporting scores for all students to provide a complete analysis of student data.

(Begin 1/12/05)

Cycle 2 Goal

By the end of the cycle, all students will increase their scores by at least one proficiency point in the areas of voice and students already scoring a 3 in the area of voice will maintain their scores on a teacher-made writing assessment scored by the State Writing Rubric due to teachers demonstrating proficiency in teaching elaboration, hook and transitional word strategies. Goal is aligned to school goal and includes growth for all students. Goal is based on a specific area of writing based on student need.

Pre-test data

Teacher-made assessment aligned with state writing rubric

• 3 out of 105 5th graders scored a 0 on the Voice domain
• 61 out of 105 5th graders scored 1.0 or 1.5 on the Voice domain
• 24 out of 105 5th graders scored 2.0 or 2.5 on the Voice domain
• 17 out of 105 5th graders scored 3 on the Voice domain

Scores are reported for number of students scoring at all performance levels which helps maintain a focus on moving individual students.

Instructional Strategies

• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “Revision Mini Lesson” strategy for improving the voice domain
• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “Question Hook” strategy for improving students’ introduction in their writing
• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “Onomatopoeia Hook” strategy for improving students’ introduction in their writing
• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “Hyperbole Hook” strategy for improving students’ introduction in their writing
• Teachers will develop lessons using the “Transitional Words” strategy to improve students’ voice and organization in their writing.
• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “Show vs. Tell” strategy for developing elaboration in students’ writing
• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “Sensory Detail” strategy for developing elaboration in students’ writing
• Teachers will develop a lesson using the “No Explanation” strategy for developing elaboration in students’ writing

Post-test results from teacher-made assessment aligned to State Writing Rubric
• 10 students out of 105 students scored 1.0 or 1.5 in Voice
• 62 students out of 105 students scored 2.0 or 2.5 in Voice
• 33 students out of 105 students scored a 3.0 in Voice

Cluster Members also analyzed students’ scores in Content and Development and Organization to evaluate impact of strategies to improve Voice on other areas of student writing

Pre–test results
• 54 students out of 103 5th graders scored below a 3 on the Content and Development domain of a teacher-made assessment aligned to the State Writing Rubric.
• 69 students out of 103 5th graders scored below a 3 on the Organization domain of a teacher-made assessment aligned to the State Writing Rubric

Post–test results – Content and Development
• 76 students out of 105 students scored 3 or higher in Content and Development
• 84 students out of 105 students scored a 3 or higher in Organization

Teacher-made pre – and post tests are aligned to State Writing Rubric. Students’ scores in voice are reported for each performance level. Cluster also analyzed impact of strategies on other low scoring areas of student writing which were content and development and organization.

****Due to this being the school’s first year of TAP implementation and teacher performance level, the Leadership Team decided to focus on the two main areas of need based on test data. Comments: Cluster cycle goals are aligned to school goal. Strategies are aligned to cluster goal and school goal. Data is provided on specific number of students scoring in each performance level of Voice domain.
### Cluster Meeting Records Rubric: Cluster TSI – 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptors</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>&lt;br&gt;The cluster goal:</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Cluster goal defines performance results for all students in specific areas of writing. It is aligned to the school ELA goal and to the yearly cluster goal in reading and writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Has clearly defined results in terms of student learning gains.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is directly aligned to the school plan.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;The cluster outcome includes a:</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Teachers are to develop a lesson using the “Show vs. Tell” elaboration strategy for immediate implementation in their classrooms. Cluster outcome references improvement in a specific area of student writing and is measured by a teacher-made assessment aligned to the state writing rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear link between what is being learned in Cluster and the implementation in the classroom to address identified student learning need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reference to the immediate and appropriate classroom application of cluster learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Follow-Up</strong>&lt;br&gt;For career teachers includes:</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Teachers are to immediately implement the strategy in their classrooms. Specific assignments are made to bring back two low, two medium, and two high examples of student writing for the purpose of analyzing characteristics of each performance level. Specific follow-up by master and mentor teacher is referenced in the way of modeling the strategy, working with groups of students and observing in teacher’s classrooms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Immediate and specific implementation of cluster learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The collection and analysis of student data to monitor the intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For master/mentors includes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Scheduled appointments before the next cluster meeting to provide teachers with further assistance in the form of classroom-based demonstration/team teaching/coaching</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Range Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;The cluster long range-plan includes reference to and quality implementation of all 5 of the STEPS for Effective Learning as evidenced by:</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Pre- and post-test are based on the State Writing Rubric. Number of students scoring at each performance level of rubric is recorded. Evidence is provided that the cluster is continually monitoring student performance through the analysis of student writing. Strategies are appropriately sequenced and segmented and are focused on improving student writing. Master teacher continually provides assistance though modeling of strategies in cluster. Assistance by master and/or mentor teacher in the classrooms is clearly referenced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• High-quality pre/post assessments to monitor student work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appropriately sequenced/segmented high-quality new learning (proven application showing student growth)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Master/mentor teacher assistance in the form of demonstration/team teaching to ensure all members effectively transfer new learning for their students in the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Continual</strong> monitoring of student work using formative assessments to determine whether intervention is effective</td>
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Ongoing Professional Growth: Quality Implementation Cluster
Observation Sheet TSI – 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORING</th>
<th>Comment: Overall Score 4.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Exemplary</td>
<td>The cluster leader (CL) explained the new learning would be on the “Show vs. Tell” strategy which was another component of elaboration. She defined the strategy and related it to the school ELA goal, but did not reference research she had conducted for use of the strategy. Examples of student work from low, medium, and high performing students from CL’s implementation of the strategy were provided orally and through use of a handout. The critical attributes of the strategy were clearly identified and a copy of these attributes was provided to the teachers. Each attribute was identified as it was modeled, and the CL continually reviewed them throughout the cluster. The critical attributes were also related to the TAP instruction rubric. Throughout the cluster, the CL asked higher order questions such as, “How can you push her to elaborate even more?” She also led teachers to clarify their responses by asking them to tell her more about what they saw in student work. She asked one teacher to explain how a comment about a medium student’s writing was different from the comment previously made about a low student’s writing. She continually paraphrased teachers’ comments to increase the learning for all teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Proficient</td>
<td>Coaching questions: How did the CL identify and explain the critical attributes? How will the way in which she did this impact teachers’ new learning? What were the relevant examples (student work) that the CL provided, and how were they used to enhance teacher understanding? How does this impact the CL’s expertise in demonstrating the strategy and in ensuring accurate transfer of the new learning into the teachers’ classrooms? Why do cluster leaders need to ask higher order questions of the teachers? How did the CL use questioning during the cluster? How does this type of questioning impact teacher learning and implementation of the strategy? (lead participants to make the connections between higher level questions to higher level thinking which leads teachers in applying the new learning for their individual students’ needs and classroom situations as opposed to a “cookie cutter” approach of the strategy for everyone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Developing</td>
<td>Suggestions for strengthening: Strategies demonstrated during cluster should be research based and the source of the research referenced. CL referenced two students’ sentences as evidence of the strategy’s impact on student learning; however, she provided seven examples on the handout. The use of the handout was very strong, but making reference to it during the cluster would have ensured its use by the teachers. When identifying critical attributes of a strategy, teachers’ ability to implement them proficiently is strengthened with the use of a handout. This can be further strengthened with an explanation for how each attribute should be implemented. Example: What are the how and why of the strategy that teachers need to explain to their students? What are some questions teachers need to ask students to lead them to stronger elaboration in their writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Unsatisfactory</td>
<td></td>
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**Expertise of Leader**

4.0
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Leader as Facilitator</th>
<th>4.0</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CL began cluster by reviewing the school goal, cluster goal, and the cluster cycle goal. She led teachers in summarizing previous cluster learning and provided opportunities for teachers to present results from the implementation of this learning on students’ writing. CL was prepared with materials, such as handouts, overhead transparencies, and examples of her writing and students’ writing by level of performance. She presented examples of students’ writing from her implementation of the strategy and provided copies of student work. An agenda was provided which stated an outcome connected to the LRP and the school plan. The specific means for assessing student work was not provided. Specific assignments were stated for student work that teachers were to bring back to cluster and follow-up support that would be offered by the master teacher. A strong sense of purpose was established for the meeting that was connected to an identified area of weakness in students' writing, specifically their use of “choppy, basic, simple sentences.” During development of the new learning, the CL referred to the characteristics of low and high performing students and assisted teachers in identifying how the strategy would address their needs. Teachers began development of sentences and paragraphs to use in their classroom that included their students' names and interests. Coaching questions: How did the CL activate prior teacher knowledge and make connections to previous cluster learning? Why is it important for teachers to see the continuum of learning? How was the CL’s use of materials effective for teacher learning? Why is it important to provide a complete agenda to cluster members? (Refer to the rubric and specifically discuss the elements of measurable outcome, aligned assignments, and definitive follow-up) Why is it important to provide a sufficient amount of time for teachers to develop the new learning? How did the CL assist teachers in developing the elaboration strategy? (specifically the use of questioning and in making connections to the list of characteristics of low and high students) How did the CL utilize the list of student characteristics the teachers had identified? (emphasize the importance of using student information to inform decisions during the cluster specifically during development of new learning) Suggestions for strengthening: Make clear connection for &quot;Visualization&quot; and &quot;Interesting&quot; strategies used previously to &quot;Show vs. Tell&quot; strategy in order to provide clear connections for teachers and their students. It is important for teachers to make this connection in the classroom for the students as well. Improve lesson pacing in order to provide ample development time for teachers. When planning a cluster, appropriately segment each part for efficient use of time. Refer to Sample Cluster Protocol in Cluster Handbook for suggested time allotments.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Member Participation/ Preparation</th>
<th>4.5</th>
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<tr>
<td>All teachers brought examples of student work from implementation of previous cluster learning. They identified characteristics of low, medium, and high performing students which were recorded by master teacher. As teachers identified these characteristics, the master teacher led them to identify ways to improve student achievement through higher level questions such as, &quot;What do we need to do with our high students to make sure they elaborate but write in complete sentences?&quot; Teachers presented ways they had assisted all students which provided for collaboration among cluster members and will increase teacher proficiency. Student information was used throughout cluster to inform decisions concerning the implementation of the new learning. During development of the new learning teachers referred to the list of characteristics of low and high students to ensure their development addressed specific student needs. Coaching questions: How were teachers prepared for the cluster? How do they know the impact of previous cluster learning? How was the student information that teachers presented used to inform decisions during the cluster by the CL and the teachers? (Again, how did CL's questions support this?) How did teachers develop proficiency for implementing the new learning in their classrooms? Suggestions for strengthening: Significant student information was presented by teachers, and the CL referred to the list of student characteristics during development of the new learning. Strengthen this connection by quickly modeling modifications and providing specific questions to use in assisting students, specifically low students, in developing elaboration in their writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Content</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<td>The content of the cluster is part of a logical, clearly defined continuum of teacher learning that is focused on improving student writing as evidenced by the CL’s review and activation of teachers’ prior knowledge. The master teacher presented student work from her implementation of the strategy by reading sentences students wrote prior to the lesson and reading students’ sentences after her lesson. Copies of sentences written before and after implementation of the strategy from high, medium, and low performing students were given to the teachers. This documentation provided evidence of significant improvements in student writing from implementation of the elaboration strategy. The master teacher also explained how she used questioning to assist the low students in elaborating. <strong>Coaching questions:</strong> How did teachers know the strategy would significantly impact student achievement? Why is it important for the cluster leader to make a direct relationship between implementation of the strategy and improvement in student achievement? Why is it important for cluster leaders to model analysis and effective use of formative assessments from their own classroom? How did the CL model this during the cluster? How does this fit into the scope and sequence of cluster learning? <strong>Suggestions for strengthening:</strong> Verbally make clear connections for teachers for how previously learned strategies (&quot;Visualization&quot; and &quot;Interesting&quot;) connect to &quot;Show vs. Tell&quot; strategy. This connection also needs to be made for students during implementation of the &quot;Show vs. Tell&quot; strategy in classrooms; therefore, the CL needs to model this in cluster. The CL provided numerous handouts to assist teachers in implementation of the “Show vs. Tell” strategy. Further define the critical attributes by including explanations and questions teachers can utilize during implementation of the strategy in their classrooms. Make reference to materials provided during the demonstration. Make clear connections and quickly model for teachers on how this strategy can continually be used to improve elaboration in students’ writing across curriculum areas.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Cluster/Classroom Connection</th>
<th>5.0</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During development of the new learning it is clear that teachers will be able to immediately implement the strategy accurately in their classrooms. Members are to select examples of writing from two low, two medium, and two high performing students to bring to the next cluster. Specific plans are made for the master and mentor teacher to observe or model in the teachers’ classrooms. <strong>Coaching questions:</strong> What are teachers to look for in their students’ work from implementation of the strategy? How does a specific assignment lead teachers to effective analysis of formative assessments? Why is it important for teachers to receive support from master and mentor following the cluster? How will this master and mentor support teachers in the classroom?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**OVERALL COMMENTS:** Cluster is strong in connection to school plan and previous cluster learning. The use of a handout identifying the critical attributes contributed to teachers’ new learning. How could the new learning have been enhanced even greater if the following had been included on the handout: the how and why of what teachers were to explain about the new strategy and examples of questions for students to ask each other during pair/share? Member participation was strong. All members came to cluster prepared and discussed ways to modify the strategy to help all students achieve. Examination of student work was focused on students’ needs by sub-groups of achievement. CL continually brought teachers back to the characteristics of their students to provide strong purpose for use of the strategy and to identify ways they could assist all students in improving their writing.
Cluster TSI – 1  
Total Averaged Score – 3.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Notes</th>
<th>Implementing Instruction</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster leader (CL) reviewed and explained the school plan and cluster goal which were written on the board. She stated, “Today we are working on the ‘Show vs. Tell’ strategy which is another component of elaboration.” Learning objective for this strategy was connected to previous cluster learning through a summarization of the content from previous clusters. Learning objective was directly related to teachers’ individual students through identification of low, medium, and high performing students and how the strategy would be used to improve all student achievement in writing. Teachers began development of writing examples for immediate implementation of the strategy in their classrooms.</td>
<td>Standards and Objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content was made meaningful to teachers through explanations of how the strategy would improve their individual students’ writing based on their analysis of student work. The new learning was directly related to the goals set by the school and the cluster. Critical attributes of the new strategy were related to the TAP Instructional Rubric. Teachers had opportunities to ask questions related to implementation of the strategy by pretending to be the students. CL reinforced and rewarded effort through comments such as, “Right, and I know exactly what you mean so I think that would be a great idea to take out and isolate those sentences.” She also used comments such as, “very good”, to reinforce teachers’ efforts during modeling of the strategy.</td>
<td>Motivating Students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL recorded characteristics of low, medium, and high performing students on overhead transparency. Handouts of critical attributes of the strategy, examples of sentences, CL’s paragraph, and examples of student work were provided to improve teachers’ proficiency in implementing the strategy. CL modeled and labeled each critical attribute of the strategy. Internal summaries were used to continually review the critical attributes. For example, after the third attribute, the CL went back and summarized the first two. New learning was logically sequenced and segmented. All communication was focused on improving students’ writing.</td>
<td>Presenting Instructional Content</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster started promptly with a clear beginning by reviewing school plan, cluster goal, and previous learning. CL modeled the strategy with the teachers participating as students. Due to the length of time this took, the development time for new learning may have been shortened. Closure was provided by the CL through a review of the critical attributes. Follow-up and assignments for the next cluster were clear. Routine for distributing materials was seamless and</td>
<td>Lesson Structure and Pacing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructional time was not lost during cluster. CL moved efficiently from introduction of new learning to modeling to teacher development.

All materials were teacher made and supported the cluster objective. Teachers’ participation in the strategy supported the new learning. By being participants and continually hearing how the strategy related to their students, teachers’ attention was sustained. Teachers had opportunities to continually interact during the cluster through presenting of student work, working in pairs during modeling of the lesson, and working together during development of the strategy. CL continually challenged teachers to develop the strategy so that it would improve the writing for all students and to make their examples relevant to their students. CL provided choices by asking teachers to identify her basic sentences and revise them. Teachers also had choices in development of the new learning as it related to their individual students.

CL frequently used questioning to push teachers to a higher level of thinking. Example; “How will this strategy help our low kids? “How can you push her to elaborate even more?” CL also modeled questioning for use with students. All questions were focused on improving students’ writing and ranged from knowledge and comprehension to evaluation. Majority of questions required individual responses. CL provided wait time during modeling of strategy specifically when teachers were asked to revise her sentence about the appearance of the trunk. CL called on volunteers and non-volunteers to ensure all members participated in cluster.

The CL frequently used academic feedback during analysis of student work, modeling of strategy and development of new learning to clarify and paraphrase teachers’ responses. When a teacher stated that one of her low students was just replacing a word with another word, the CL restated her comment as, “The student was just changing a word as opposed to stretching the sentence.” This was an important clarification since the cluster outcome was for teachers to develop a lesson using the “Show vs. Tell” elaboration strategy to help students add details and add voice in their writing. The CL also clarified a comment given about a student’s work as, “So we still have some choppiness, but they’re starting to elaborate some.” This statement was used to clarify the difference between a low and a medium student’s writing. The CL continually moved around the group to engage all teachers in the discussion and assist with development of new learning. Feedback from teachers on student work was regularly used to inform decisions about implementation of the strategy.

Teachers were grouped as a whole cluster and in pairs. As a cluster group, teachers understood the
expectations as evidenced by the examples of student work they all brought to cluster and their identification of student characteristics. CL held all teachers accountable for these expectations by ensuring all participated during the cluster. During modeling of the strategy and development of the new learning the teachers had opportunities to work together.

CL displayed extensive knowledge of the “Show vs. Tell” strategy by clearly explaining the critical attributes of the strategy, modeling the strategy, and providing relevant examples of student work as evidence of the strategy’s impact on student learning. She continually highlighted the key concepts (critical attributes) as she modeled the strategy. Content taught was sufficient for teachers to develop new learning.

The CL displayed an understanding of teacher and student needs by continually explaining how the strategy could be implemented in each teacher’s classroom. These explanations incorporated teachers’ primary interests which would be their students. She did challenge teachers to develop sentences incorporating their students’ names and interests as a way to motivate and engage them in the lesson. Teachers had opportunities to master the new learning and relate it directly to the needs of their students.

The CL provided teachers opportunities to analyze student work, compare and contrast characteristics of low, medium, and high performing students, and apply new learning to their classrooms. Through the assignment, teachers will evaluate its impact on student learning. During development of the strategy, teachers generated a variety of ideas and analyzed its effectiveness on their students based on the student characteristics they had identified. CL continually monitored teachers to ensure their proficiency in implementing the strategy and understanding of its purpose.

Prior to the cluster, teachers had categorized student work as low, medium, and high. During the cluster, teachers generated ideas for how to assist all students improve in writing, drew conclusions about the strategy’s impact on student achievement, and created their own writing examples for use in their classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Reinforcement Objective:</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the conference, the CL will be able to explain how she uses questioning to push teachers to a higher level of thinking by requiring them to apply the new learning and evaluate its impact on the achievement of all students. She will be able to explain the importance of asking questions that require higher order thinking skills and modeling this for teachers to do with their students. She will be to explain how this type of questioning improves student achievement and teacher proficiency.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refinement Objective:

By the end of the conference, the CL will be able to explain how she plans for the pacing of a cluster to ensure teachers have sufficient time to develop the new learning for implementation in their classrooms.

Conference Plan (Refer to Coaching Questions on Cluster Scores):

Introduction

Good afternoon, I appreciate you allowing me to visit your cluster today on the “Show vs. Tell” strategy. Our purpose in meeting today is for professional growth. We will spend time talking about the cluster and discussing teacher behaviors with a goal of developing ideas on how to enhance student achievement and teacher proficiency.

Self Analysis

Tell me how you think the cluster went. Did anything happen differently from how you had planned it or anticipated it would go?

Additional self analysis depending on teacher’s response

When you plan a cluster, how do you decide the number and type of questions you will ask? How do you plan for moving the teachers to a higher level of thinking? How do you plan for the pacing of clusters?

Reinforcing the Teacher

During the cluster, you asked teachers a high frequency of questions requiring them to think critically and analyze the impact of the strategy on their specific students. You asked them to explain why it is important to explain the strategy and its purpose to the students. Teachers were asked to predict how the strategy would impact their students and how they would need to make adjustments for the low students. The questions you asked were purposeful and aligned to the objective of the cluster to improve student writing. How does this type of questioning have a positive impact on student and teacher achievement?

Statement of recommendation

Continue to incorporate high quality questions in your clusters that require teachers to think beyond the knowledge and comprehension levels. Look for opportunities to engage all teachers in responding to questions by modeling questioning and wait time for the teachers. As you ask higher level questions of the teachers, use opportunities to explain how these same types of questions impact student achievement. You told teachers how important questioning was for the lower students. Consider providing a list of questions for teachers to use with students when teaching them to elaborate in their writing. During the teacher development time of the cluster, teachers could also develop the questions to ask students based on the writing they are creating. These two techniques can help to ensure that teachers will incorporate higher level questions during implementation of the strategy in their classrooms.
Elicit Feedback
How does the use of higher level questions by the CL impact teachers’ analysis of student work and their competency in developing the new learning for implementation in their classrooms?

Refining the Teacher’s Skill

When developing a cluster, how do you decide on the pacing of the cluster? It is important to review the school and cluster goals and prior cluster learning. You did this effectively and then modeled the strategy for the teachers which is critical for developing teacher proficiency. However, due to the length of time taken for these portions of the cluster, teachers may not have had sufficient time to develop the strategy and discuss it with their peers. In fact you stated that they only had six or seven minutes for development. To ensure teachers successfully implement the new learning in their classrooms, they need sufficient time to ask questions and work collaboratively with you and their peers. Teachers learn from hearing each others’ thoughts and through sharing of their writing.

Modeling the skill

Sufficient time needs to be allowed during clusters for teachers to fully develop the new learning for implementation in the classrooms. Teachers’ proficiency can be strengthened through collaboration and opportunities to peer evaluate each other’s work. When planning a cluster, segment the different parts and assign time allotment for each. Refer to the Sample Cluster Meeting Protocol in the Cluster Handbook for suggested time allotments. This will help you to effectively pace the cluster and ensure teachers have sufficient time for development.

Guided Practice

In reflecting on your cluster, how do you think this structure and pacing could have impacted teacher learning?

Closure

As you think about we discussed today, how will what you learned impact the clusters you plan and lead in the future?
### Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards and Objectives</th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated.</td>
<td>Most learning objectives and state content standards are communicated.</td>
<td>Few learning objectives and state content standards are communicated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-objectives are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson’s major objective.</td>
<td>Sub-objectives are mostly aligned to the lesson’s major objective.</td>
<td>Sub-objectives are inconsistently aligned to the lesson’s major objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning objectives are: (a) consistently connected to what students have previously learned, (b) know from life experiences, and (c) integrated with other disciplines.</td>
<td>Learning objectives are connected to what students have previously learned.</td>
<td>Learning objectives are rarely connected to what students have previously learned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations for student performance are clear, demanding, and high.</td>
<td>Expectations for student performance are clear.</td>
<td>Expectations for student performance are vague.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State standards are displayed and referenced throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>State standards are displayed.</td>
<td>State standards are displayed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.</td>
<td>There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.</td>
<td>There is evidence that few students demonstrate mastery of the objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivating Students</th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher consistently organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students.</td>
<td>The teacher rarely organizes the content so that it is personally meaningful and relevant to students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher consistently develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity and exploration are valued.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity and exploration are valued.</td>
<td>The teacher rarely develops learning experiences where inquiry, curiosity and exploration are valued.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher regularly reinforces and rewards effort.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes reinforces and rewards effort.</td>
<td>The teacher rarely reinforces and rewards effort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting Instructional Content</th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of content always includes: visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson.</td>
<td>Presentation of content most of the time includes: visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson.</td>
<td>Presentation of content rarely includes: visuals that establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson, and include internal summaries of the lesson.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas.</td>
<td>examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas.</td>
<td>examples, illustrations, analogies, and labels for new concepts and ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations.</td>
<td>modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations.</td>
<td>modeling by the teacher to demonstrate his or her performance expectations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concise communication.</td>
<td>concise communication.</td>
<td>concise communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logical sequencing and segmenting.</td>
<td>logical sequencing and segmenting.</td>
<td>logical sequencing and segmenting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all essential information.</td>
<td>all essential information.</td>
<td>all essential information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.</td>
<td>no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.</td>
<td>no irrelevant, confusing, or non-essential information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lesson Structure and Pacing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All lessons start promptly.</td>
<td>• Most lessons start promptly.</td>
<td>• Lessons are not started promptly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The lesson’s structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, and end, and time for reflection.</td>
<td>• The lesson’s structure is coherent, with a beginning, middle, and end, and time for reflection.</td>
<td>• The lesson has a structure, but may be missing closure or introductory elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pacing is brisk, and provides many opportunities for individual students who progress at different learning rates.</td>
<td>• Pacing is appropriate, and sometimes provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates.</td>
<td>• Pacing is appropriate for less than half of the students, and rarely provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Routines for distributing materials are seamless.</td>
<td>• Routines for distributing materials are efficient.</td>
<td>• Routines for distributing materials are inefficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No instructional time is lost during transitions.</td>
<td>• Little instructional time is lost during transitions.</td>
<td>• Considerable time is lost during transitions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Activities and Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities and materials include all of the following:</td>
<td>Activities and materials include most of the following:</td>
<td>Activities and materials include few of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• support the lesson objectives.</td>
<td>• support the lesson objectives.</td>
<td>• support the lesson objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are challenging.</td>
<td>• are challenging.</td>
<td>• are challenging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sustain students’ attention.</td>
<td>• sustain students’ attention.</td>
<td>• sustain students’ attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• elicit a variety of thinking.</td>
<td>• elicit a variety of thinking.</td>
<td>• elicit a variety of thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide time for reflection.</td>
<td>• provide time for reflection.</td>
<td>• provide time for reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are relevant to students’ lives.</td>
<td>• are relevant to students’ lives.</td>
<td>• are relevant to students’ lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide opportunities for student to student interaction.</td>
<td>• provide opportunities for student to student interaction.</td>
<td>• provide opportunities for student to student interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• induce student curiosity and suspense.</td>
<td>• induce student curiosity and suspense.</td>
<td>• induce student curiosity and suspense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• provide students with choices.</td>
<td>• provide students with choices.</td>
<td>• provide students with choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• incorporate multimedia and technology.</td>
<td>• incorporate multimedia and technology.</td>
<td>• incorporate multimedia and technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulatives, and resources from museums, cultural centers, etc).</td>
<td>• incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulatives, and resources from museums, cultural centers, etc).</td>
<td>• incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts (e.g., teacher made materials, manipulatives, and resources from museums, etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition, sometimes activities are game-like, involve simulations, require creating products, and demand self-direction and self-monitoring.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Questioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher questions are varied and high quality providing a balanced mix of question types:</td>
<td>Teacher questions are varied and high quality providing for some, but not all, question types:</td>
<td>Teacher questions are inconsistent in quality and include few question types:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• knowledge and comprehension,</td>
<td>• knowledge and comprehension,</td>
<td>• knowledge and comprehension,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• application and analysis, and</td>
<td>• application and analysis, and</td>
<td>• application and analysis,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• creation and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Questions

- **Exemplary (5)**
  - Questions are consistently purposeful and coherent.
  - A high frequency of questions is asked.
  - Questions are consistently sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
  - Questions regularly require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, written and shared responses, or group and individual answers).
  - Wait time (3-5 seconds) is consistently provided.
  - The teacher calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex.
  - Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning.

- **Proficient (3)**
  - Questions are usually purposeful and coherent.
  - A moderate frequency of questions asked.
  - Questions are sometimes sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
  - Questions sometimes require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers).
  - Wait time is sometimes provided.
  - The teacher calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and a balance of students based on ability and sex.

- **Needs Improvement (1)**
  - Questions are random and lack coherence.
  - A low frequency of questions is asked.
  - Questions are rarely sequenced with attention to the instructional goals.
  - Questions rarely require active responses (e.g., whole class signaling, choral responses, or group and individual answers).
  - Wait time is inconsistently provided.
  - The teacher mostly calls on volunteers and high ability students.

### Academic Feedback

- **Exemplary (5)**
  - Oral and written feedback is consistently academically focused, frequent, and high quality.
  - Feedback is frequently given during guided practice and homework review.
  - The teacher circulates to prompt student thinking, assess each student’s progress, and provide individual feedback.
  - Feedback from students is regularly used to monitor and adjust instruction.
  - Teacher engages students in giving specific and high quality feedback to one another.

- **Proficient (3)**
  - Oral and written feedback is mostly academically focused, frequent, and mostly high quality.
  - Feedback is sometimes given during guided practice and homework review.
  - The teacher circulates during instructional activities to support engagement, and monitor student work.
  - Feedback from students is sometimes used to monitor and adjust instruction.

- **Needs Improvement (1)**
  - The quality and timeliness of feedback is inconsistent.
  - Feedback is rarely given during guided practice and homework review.
  - The teacher circulates during instructional activities, but monitors mostly behavior.
  - Feedback from students is rarely used to monitor or adjust instruction.

### Grouping Students

- **Exemplary (5)**
  - The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or homogenous ability) consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency.
  - All students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations.
  - All students participating in groups are held

- **Proficient (3)**
  - The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or homogenous ability) adequately enhance student understanding and learning efficiency.
  - Most students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations.
  - Most students participating in groups are held

- **Needs Improvement (1)**
  - The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole class, small groups, pairs, individual; hetero-or homogenous ability) inhibit student understanding and learning efficiency.
  - Few students in groups know their roles, responsibilities, and group work expectations.
  - Few students participating in groups are held accountable for group work and
### Teacher Content Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches.</td>
<td>Teacher displays accurate content knowledge of all the subjects he or she teaches.</td>
<td>Teacher displays under-developed content knowledge in several subject areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher regularly implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.</td>
<td>Teacher sometimes implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.</td>
<td>Teacher rarely implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher regularly highlights key concepts and ideas, and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas.</td>
<td>The teacher sometimes highlights key concepts and ideas, and uses them as bases to connect other powerful ideas.</td>
<td>Teacher does not understand key concepts and ideas in the discipline, and therefore presents content in an unconnected way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited content is taught in sufficient depth to allow for the development of understanding.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teacher Knowledge of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher practices display understanding of each student's anticipated learning difficulties.</td>
<td>Teacher practices display understanding of some student anticipated learning difficulties.</td>
<td>Teacher practices demonstrate minimal knowledge of students anticipated learning difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher practices regularly incorporate student interests and cultural heritage.</td>
<td>Teacher practices sometimes incorporate student interests and cultural heritage.</td>
<td>Teacher practices rarely incorporate student interests or cultural heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught.</td>
<td>Teacher sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure children have the opportunity to master what is being taught.</td>
<td>Teacher practices demonstrate little differentiation of instructional methods or content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2 A variety of subject specific instructional strategies to teach reading comprehension, for example, would be writing summaries, predicting, clarifying vocabulary, story maps, graphic organizers, self monitoring one's understanding, etc.


**Performance definitions are provided at levels 5, 3, and 1. Raters can score performance at levels 2 or 4 based on their professional judgment.**
### Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking</th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher consistently and thoroughly teaches all four types of thinking:  
- analytical thinking where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information.  
- practical thinking where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios.  
- creative thinking where students create, design, imagine and suppose.  
- research-based thinking where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.  
The teacher regularly provides opportunities where students:  
- generate a variety of ideas and alternatives.  
- analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.  
- monitor their thinking to insure that they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies that they are using and why. | Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher consistently and thoroughly teaches two types of thinking:  
- analytical thinking where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information.  
- practical thinking where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios.  
- creative thinking where students create, design, imagine and suppose.  
- research-based thinking where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems.  
The teacher sometimes provides opportunities where students:  
- generate a variety of ideas and alternatives.  
- analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints. | The teacher implements few learning experiences that thoroughly teach any type of thinking.  
The teacher provides few opportunities where students:  
- generate a variety of ideas and alternatives.  
- analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.  
**NOTE. If the teacher regularly and thoroughly teaches one type of thinking, he or she shall receive a score of 2.** |

| Problem Solving | Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce 6 or more of the following problem solving types.  
- Abstraction  
- Categorization  
- Drawing  
- Conclusions/Justifying Solutions  
- Predicting Outcomes  
- Observing and Experimenting  
- Improving Solutions  
- Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information  
- Generating Ideas  
- Creating and Designing | Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements activities that teach and reinforce 4 or more of the following problem solving types.  
- Abstraction  
- Categorization  
- Drawing  
- Conclusions/Justifying Solution  
- Predicting Outcomes  
- Observing and Experimenting  
- Improving Solutions  
- Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information  
- Generating Ideas  
- Creating and Designing | Over the course of multiple observations, the teacher implements less than two activities that teach the following problem solving types.  
- Abstraction  
- Categorization  
- Drawing  
- Conclusions/Justifying Solution  
- Predicting Outcomes  
- Observing and Experimenting  
- Improving Solutions  
- Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information  
- Generating Ideas  
- Creating and Designing |

---

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
### Designing and Planning Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Instructional Plans</strong></th>
<th><strong>Exemplary (5)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Proficient (3)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Needs Improvement (1)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructional plans include:</td>
<td>Instructional plans include:</td>
<td>Instructional plans include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• measurable and explicit goals aligned to state content standards.</td>
<td>• goals aligned to state content standards.</td>
<td>• few goals aligned to state content standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• activities, materials, and assessments that:</td>
<td>• activities, materials, and assessments that:</td>
<td>• activities, materials, and assessments that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• are aligned to state standards.</td>
<td>• are aligned to state standards.</td>
<td>• are rarely aligned to state standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• are sequenced from basic to complex.</td>
<td>• are sequenced from basic to complex.</td>
<td>• are rarely logically sequenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• build on prior student knowledge, are relevant to students’ lives, and integrate other disciplines.</td>
<td>• build on prior student knowledge.</td>
<td>• rarely build on prior student knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, and lesson and unit closure.</td>
<td>• provide appropriate time for student work, and lesson and unit closure.</td>
<td>• inconsistently provide time for student work, and lesson and unit closure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• evidence that plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of all learners.</td>
<td>• evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, and interests of most learners.</td>
<td>• little evidence that the plan is appropriate for the age, knowledge, or interests of the learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• evidence that the plan provides regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.</td>
<td>• evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.</td>
<td>• little evidence that the plan provides some opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Student Work</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments require students to:</td>
<td>Assignments require students to:</td>
<td>Assignments require students to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• organize, interpret, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information rather than reproduce it.</td>
<td>• interpret information rather than reproduce it.</td>
<td>• mostly reproduce information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• draw conclusions, make generalizations, and produce arguments that are supported through extended writing.</td>
<td>• draw conclusions and support them through writing.</td>
<td>• rarely draw conclusions and support them through writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• connect what they are learning to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their daily lives both inside and outside of school.</td>
<td>connect what they are learning to prior learning and some life experiences.</td>
<td>• rarely connect what they are learning to prior learning or life experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Assessment Plans:
- are aligned with state content standards.
- have clear measurement criteria.
- measure student performance in more than three ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test).
- require extended written tasks.
- are portfolio-based with clear illustrations of student progress toward state content standards.
- include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction.

Assessment Plans:
- are aligned with state content standards.
- have clear measurement criteria.
- measure student performance in more than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test).
- require written tasks.
- include performance checks throughout the school year.

Assessment Plans:
- are rarely aligned with state content standards.
- have ambiguous measurement criteria.
- measure student performance in less than two ways (e.g., in the form of a project, experiment, presentation, essay, short answer, or multiple choice test).
- include performance checks, although the purpose of these checks is not clear.

The Learning Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Exemplary (5)</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student.</td>
<td>Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student.</td>
<td>Teacher expectations are not sufficiently high for every student.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes.</td>
<td>Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes.</td>
<td>Teacher creates an environment where mistakes and failure are not viewed as learning experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher creates learning opportunities where all students can experience success.</td>
<td>Teacher creates learning opportunities where most students can experience success.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate little or no pride in the quality of their work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students take initiative and follow through with their own work.</td>
<td>Students complete their work according to teacher expectations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher optimizes instructional time, teaches more material, and demands better performance from every student.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managing Student Behavior

| Students are consistently well-behaved, and on task. | Students are mostly well-behaved, and on task, some minor learning disruptions may occur. | Students are not well-behaved and are often off-task. |
| The teacher uses several techniques such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences to maintain appropriate student behavior. | The teacher uses some techniques such as social approval, contingent activities, and consequences to maintain appropriate student behavior. | The teacher uses few techniques to maintain appropriate student behavior. |
| The teacher overlooks inconsequential behavior. | The teacher overlooks some inconsequential behavior, but other times addresses it stopping the lesson. | The teacher cannot distinguish between inconsequential behavior and inappropriate behavior. |
| Disruptions frequently occur. | The teacher deals with disruptions. | Disruptions frequently occur. |
- The teacher deals with students who have caused disruptions rather than the entire class.
- The teacher attends to disruptions quickly and firmly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>The classroom</th>
<th>Welcome all members and guests</th>
<th>is organized and understandable to all students. Supplies, equipment, and resources are easily and readily accessible.</th>
<th>displays student work that frequently changes.</th>
<th>is arranged to promote individual and group learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The classroom</td>
<td>welcomes most members and guests.</td>
<td>is organized and understandable to most students. Supplies, equipment, and resources are accessible.</td>
<td>displays student work.</td>
<td>is arranged to promote individual and group learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The classroom</td>
<td>is somewhat cold and uninviting.</td>
<td>is not well organized and understandable to students. Supplies, equipment, and resources are difficult to access.</td>
<td>does not display student work.</td>
<td>is not arranged to promote group learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respectful Culture</th>
<th>Teacher-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect for one another.</th>
<th>Students exhibit caring and respect for one another.</th>
<th>Teacher seeks out, and is receptive to the interests and opinions of all students.</th>
<th>Positive relationships and interdependence characterize the classroom.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-student interactions are generally friendly, but may reflect occasional inconsistencies, favoritism, or disregard for students' cultures.</td>
<td>Students exhibit respect for the teacher, and are generally polite to each other.</td>
<td>Teacher is sometimes receptive to the interests and opinions of students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-student interactions are sometimes authoritarian, negative, or inappropriate.</td>
<td>Students exhibit disrespect for the teacher.</td>
<td>Student interaction is characterized by conflict, sarcasm, or put-downs.</td>
<td>Teacher is not receptive to interests and opinions of students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluator/Self Evaluation Report

Evaluator/Self Evaluation Report

Evaluator ________________________________ Administrator/Master/Mentor/Self Evaluation

Teacher Evaluated ____________________________________________________________

Date _______________  Time ___________________ Subject __________________

School Name __________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designing and Planning Instruction</th>
<th>Evaluator Scores</th>
<th>Self-Eval Scores</th>
<th>Refinement Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Learning Environment

Expectations
Managing Student Behavior
Environment
Respectful Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Reinforcement Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards and Objectives(S&amp;O)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating Students(MOT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting Instruction Content(PIC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson Structure and Pacing(LS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities and Materials(ACT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning(QU)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Feedback(Feed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping Students(GRP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Content Knowledge(TCK)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Knowledge of Students(TKS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking(TH)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving(PS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluator Signature ____________________________ Date _______________
Teacher Signature ____________________________ Date _______________
Personal Styles

Compass Points

North

Acting –
"Let's do it!"
Likes to act, try things, plunge in.

West

Paying attention to detail –
Likes to know the who, what, when, where, why, before acting.

East

Speculating –
Likes to look at the big picture, the possibilities, before acting.

South

Caring –
Likes to know that everyone's feelings have been taken into consideration, that their voices have been heard, before acting.

Personal Style Questions:
Record the group's answers on chart paper.

1. What are the strengths of our style? (List four adjectives)
2. What are the limitations of our style? (List four adjectives)
3. What style do we find the most difficult to work with? Why?
4. What do others need to know about us that will make our work together more successful?
Preparing for Success in a TAP School

Evaluation

Presenter’s Name: _____________________________

Your Position: Principal       Master                     Mentor
(circle one)

State_______________________       Date_________________

1) What information did the presenter provide that was most effective in helping you accomplish the workshop goals:

- Prepare to implement TAP in your school
- Understand and be prepared to fulfill your TAP role

2) What information provided by the presenter was the least helpful?

- Prepare to implement TAP in your school
- Understand and be prepared to fulfill your TAP role

3) Below is a list of topics covered in the PSTS workshop. For each item please rate, on a scale of 1 (not prepared) to 5 (very prepared), how prepared you feel to implement the elements of the TAP program in your school. Feel free to add any comments you see as being helpful towards the improvement of this workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Not Prepared</th>
<th>Very Prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership roles- (refers to your role) (Master, Mentor and Principal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Leadership Team Records (prepared to keep and use the records to track activities progress)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster Group Goal Setting (prepared to lead cluster group in appropriate/ effective goal setting)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designing Cluster Group Activities (prepared to design activities that will help the group reach its goal)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Designing Cluster Group Follow-up
(prepared to ensure cluster learning is transferred to classroom activities)

Cluster Group Records
(prepared to create and use cluster records to track progress and set new goals)

The STEPS for Effective Learning
(know and understand the STEPS and how to use them to create teacher growth)

Designing an Intervention
(prepared to develop a classroom intervention to support teacher professional growth)

Designing Individual Growth Plans
(prepared to assist teachers in areas of growth and strategies to improve instruction)

Data Analysis
(prepared to guide others to use data to inform classroom learning and instruction)

4) Below is a list of qualities that go into creating an effective presentation. For each item please rate, on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), how well your presenter incorporated these attributes into his/her presentation.

Communicating concepts clearly

Creating useful examples of the TAP concepts in action

Exhibiting mastery of the topics

Listening

Answering questions and concerns

Creating a safe learning environment

5) Other Comments:
## Evaluation Overview

### Training Lesson #13

**Grades 4-Language Arts**

### Evidence Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards and Objectives</th>
<th>Motivating Students</th>
<th>Presenting Instructional Content</th>
<th>Lesson Structure and Pacing</th>
<th>Activities and Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher clearly communicated to students that the work they would do to develop a list of adjectives would be used to write a descriptive paragraph after the chart activity. Further, she communicated the role of adjectives for describing any noun (person, place or thing). After describing the activity using the apple, she further explained (using the student example of a banana) that “we could do this with any noun.” Sub-objectives were connected to student prior knowledge using the previous lesson (reviewing adjectives used to describe the toad in a story, 5 sentence paragraph, topic sentence, describing sentences, and a closing sentence). Expectations for student performance were clear, though not very demanding or high, and most students demonstrated mastery of the objective. The teacher organized the learning activity so that it was personally meaningful. She achieved this by using a relevant student experience (an apple in their lunchbox). The learning experience valued student inquiry and exploration using pieces of apple for exploration with a new focus (adjectives), yet the level of challenge may have limited the inquiry and exploration. The teacher regularly reinforced and rewarded effort using the students’ own words to restate and expand their thinking (“Yes, there were many adjectives that described the toad.”) Students were motivated to participate and to complete the activity well. The classroom adjective chart provided a visual to organize the content of the lesson – modeling expectations for independent and group work using the chart and then collecting classroom information to be referenced during the written activity. (Note: the chart was used to support different learning styles and to provide a couple of written examples on the chart.) The teacher provided meaningful, verbal, internal summaries that allowed students to build meaning between segments of the lesson. This maintained the focus on the learning (using adjectives) rather than on the activities themselves (e.g. “Now you will use these adjectives to describe your noun in your lunch, to describe the apple in your lunch.”) The lesson had a coherent beginning, middle and culminating written product. Time for reflection was provided in partner groups and in the written work. The teacher provided transitions between activities which described the purposeful learning behind each segment of the lesson (e.g. “Now we will use these words to write about the apple in your lunch.”) The teacher summarized the objective of the learning activity bringing closure to the lesson. (“We used adjectives in our writing – how do adjectives help our writing? Does it give our writing ‘voice?’ Students, our writing becomes richer and we can feel and taste the apple just by the words that you use.”) While all of the activities and materials support the lesson objective, the level of challenge may inhibit the variety of thinking elicited by the activity. Students did not have choice other than the choice of words used to describe the apple. It was unclear whether the student curiosity or suspense was induced with the level of the activity. The activity itself</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
did not challenge all levels of students.

| The teacher questions were mostly limited to the comprehension/recall level of thinking. “What do those words do?” “Who can remember?” “Which words described the toad?” “Do we have enough adjectives to write about our apple?” “Can someone tell me what we will do with these words?” A moderate frequency of questions was asked. Questions sometimes required student responses to be active (e.g. whole class reading the list of categories from class chart). The balance of students called on included mostly volunteers. | Questioning | 2 |
| The feedback was sometimes academically focused and specific. The teacher circulated during guided practice supporting engagement, monitor and expand student thinking (e.g. “Yes, all these words describe the toad” and “Yes, adjectives describe – a person, place or thing – and the noun yesterday was the toad.” | Academic Feedback | 2 |
| This whole-class lesson incorporated some work in pairs and independent written work. Though the routine of working in pairs seems well understood by the students, it is unclear how the groups were varied in any way from day to day or how students were seated for pairs to enhance the objective of the lesson for each student. Higher levels of student responses may have been developed using intentional groups with assigned roles for developing group ideas and an exposure to a variety of thinking. These groups could also be used to analyze the solutions from multiple perspectives. | Grouping | 2 |
| The teacher displayed accurate content knowledge of adjectives acting as describing words for nouns. She highlighted key concepts using accurate vocabulary (“adjectives describe nouns”) and used them as a basis to connect new powerful ideas (“yesterday the toad was our noun and today your apple will be your noun”). | Teacher Content Knowledge | 3 |
| The teacher displayed little understanding of anticipated student learning difficulties (i.e. limited vocabulary experience available specific to an apple – bitter, sour, other?) All students were assigned the same level of activity and content, with no differentiation either for higher level students who had already mastered the skills or lower level students with limited vocabulary experience. The expectations for performance among all students were low. | Knowledge of Students | 2 |
| Student thinking was limited to listing describing words and applying those words to a written descriptive paragraph. Analysis, comparing and contrasting, evaluation or exploration was not developed. Students were not provided opportunity to explain their reasoning during the lesson. | Thinking | 2 |
| Students were asked to categorize their adjectives by color, size, number, taste, smell, type, etc. They generated ideas in pairs and reported these out to the whole class for a class generated list. | Problem Solving | 3 |
Sample Post Conference

Lesson Number 13:

Reinforcement Objective

By the end of the conference, the teacher will explain how she plans her lessons so that the sub-objectives are both aligned to the lesson’s major objective and to what the students have previously learned.

Refinement Objective

By the end of the conference, the teacher will be able to develop at least one activity that generates quality student responses by (1) clearly identifying expectations for performance so student accountability is clear, and (2) providing enrichment activities that expand thinking during the activity.

Rationale for Refinement Objective

Well defined activities provide opportunities for students to discuss and process learning.

Conference Plan:

Introduction

Good afternoon. Today we are conferencing to discuss your Language Arts lesson I observed yesterday. The purpose of this conference is professional growth to enhance student learning.

Self Analysis

How do you think this lesson went? When you think about the strategies you used to teach students about adjectives, which of these did you find to be the most effective? Why? If you could back and change something in the lesson, is there anything you would have done differently?

Additional Self Analysis Depending on Teacher’s Response

How do you plan your lessons to both meet the needs and challenge all of the students in your class?

Reinforcing the Teacher

One of the things you did very well in your lesson was to make it clear to the students both the purpose of the lesson and its connection to their larger learning. You stated the objective at the beginning of the lesson and at various intervals reiterated the objective. This kept students focused on the “why?” (writing descriptive paragraphs) of what they were learning rather than just the “how” (the apple activity). Your expectations for student performance were always transparent and it was clear at the end of the lesson that most students mastered the objective.
Statement of Recommendation

Continue to clearly state and reinforce the standards and objectives of the lesson. It previews the lesson for the students and thus creates more opportunities for them to internalize the information in a meaningful way. Can you think of other ways that may be effective in communicating the standards and objectives to the students to enhance their learning?

Refining the Teacher’s Skill

Earlier in the discussion you said that while most of the students appeared to benefit from the “apple” activity it seemed that some of the students were not challenged by it and others still did not understand the concept of using adjectives for descriptive writing, even when the lesson was over. You also noticed that when students presented their answers there was not a great variety in the adjectives used. Do you think that you could have tailored the activity to be appropriately challenging for all students, and increased the variety of answers?

Modeling the Skill

To effectively design an activity for students that is challenging to all students, the activity must have: clearly defined accountability, roles and responsibilities for each student, well explained new learning, and an enrichment component. Here is an example of how this might look. First the children would listen to the story. They would then be broken down into groups of four where each student would taste an apple and develop adjectives to describe it. The class would then create a community word bank based on the groups’ responses. Afterwards, the teacher reviews a paragraph rubric and expectations for good paragraph writing. Now in groups of two, the students read a poem loaded with adjectives and the rubric for this activity. The students write their paragraph about the apple, read it orally to their partner, who provides feedback. Each student then edits his/her paper based on this feedback. Advanced teams are challenged to expand by designing a mystery fruit through descriptive adjectives. Students can then present their paragraphs while the others use the rubric to score them.

Guided Practice

Looking at your lesson, what might be another way for you to present the adjective activity to stimulate a larger variety of vocabulary words, and still make it challenging for all students your class?

Closure

As you think about what we discussed today, how will what you learned impact the lessons you plan and deliver in the future?
Professional Growth Leadership Team: Planning Form for TAP School Start–Up

Planning Form for TAP School Start–UP
(“How will my life as a career teacher change as a result of TAP?”)

School Name: _________________________________________________________________
Date: TAP Start-Up of TAP Workshop____________________________________________

Professional Growth Team: ____________________        ____________________
____________________        ____________________   ____________________
____________________        ____________________   ____________________
TAP Overview: (person in charge)  Activity:
  • The Big Picture

Presenting Cluster Groups: (person in charge)  Activity:
  • Purpose
  • Overview
  • Cluster Growth Plans
  • Cluster Assignments
  • Incorporation of Specialists
  • STEPS for Effective Learning
## Cluster Group Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster Group Name</th>
<th>Scheduled Meeting Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher(s)</td>
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</table>

**Cluster Group Assignments (Continued)**

<table>
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<th>Cluster Group Name</th>
<th>Scheduled Meeting Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Teacher(s)</td>
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**Cluster Group Assignments (Continued)**

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</table>
**Introduction of the Rubric:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Person in Charge)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highlight Key Words</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Show Video</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consensus/National Raters’ Scores</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction of Evaluation System:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Person in Charge)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is “Value-added”?</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The PAS</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Teams</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What to expect?</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Career Teacher Responsibilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Person in Charge)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibilities Rubric</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IGP</strong></td>
<td>________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Professional Growth Leadership Team: Staff Training Topics and Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Delivery Method and Date: (whole faculty, cluster group, or individual)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Individual Growth Plans</td>
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<td>Cluster Operations</td>
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<td>TAP PBA Policies</td>
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<td>Value-Added</td>
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<td>TAP Rubrics</td>
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<td>TAP Portfolio</td>
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<td>TAP Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEPS for Effective Learning</td>
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</table>
## Managing Complex Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision +</th>
<th>Skills +</th>
<th>Purpose/Incentive +</th>
<th>Resources +</th>
<th>Action Plan</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
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<td>Confusion</td>
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<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>Resistance</td>
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<td>Frustration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Treadmill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Demonstrated skills and key verbs</td>
<td>EVALUATION:</td>
<td>SYNTHESIS:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>• compare and discriminate between ideas</td>
<td>appraise, assess, rank, recommend, convince, explain, summarize, compare, conclude, criticize, estimate, evaluate, judge, measure, rate, score, select, value, explain</td>
<td>arrange, assemble, collect, combine, compose, construct, create, design, devise, formulate, generate, invent, manage, organize, plan, propose, set-up, modify, rearrange, what if..?, generalize</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• assess value of theories, presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• make choices based on reasoned argument</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• verify value of evidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• recognize subjectivity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs:</strong> assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>• use old ideas to create new ones</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• generalize from given facts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• relate knowledge from several areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• predict, draw conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs:</strong> combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if..?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>• seeing patterns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• organization of parts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognition of hidden meanings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• identification of components</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs:</strong> analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer, separate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>• use information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use methods, concepts, theories in new situations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• solve problems using required skills or knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs:</strong> apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>• understanding information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• grasp meaning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• translate knowledge into new context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• interpret facts, compare, contrast</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• order, group, infer causes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• predict consequences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs:</strong> summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguishing, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>• observation and recall of information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of dates, events, places</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• mastery of subject matter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs:</strong> list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE:</strong> define, describe, identify, label, list, match, name, recall, recognize, record, quote, tell, collect, who, what, when, where, relate, repeat, state, underline, write, record, circle</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Bloom’s Taxonomy

#### QUESTION STARTERS

**Level I: KNOWLEDGE (Recall)**

1) What is the definition for...?
2) What happened after...?
3) Recall the facts.
4) What were the characteristics of...?
5) Which is true or false?
6) How many...?
7) Who was the...?
8) Tell in your own words.
9) Describe the...

**Level II: COMPREHENSION**

1) Why are these ideas similar?
2) In your own words retell the story of...
3) What do you think could happen?
4) How are these ideas different?
5) Explain what happened after.
6) What are some examples?
7) Can you provide a definition of...?
8) Who was the key character?

**Level III: Application (applying without understanding is not effective)**

1) What is another instance of...?
2) Demonstrate the way to...
3) Which one is most like...?
4) What questions would you ask?
5) Which factors would you change?
6) Could this have happened in...? Why or why not?
7) How would you organize these ideas?

#### POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

**Level I: KNOWLEDGE (Recall)**

1) Make a timeline of events.
2) Make a facts chart.
3) Write a list of...steps in...facts about...
4) List all the people in the story.
5) Make a chart showing...
6) Make an acrostic.
7) Recite a poem.

**Level II: COMPREHENSION**

1) Cut out or draw pictures to show an event.
2) Illustrate what you think the main idea was.
3) Make a cartoon strip showing the sequence of...
4) Write and perform a play based on the...
5) Compare this_____ with______.
6) Construct a model of __________.
7) Write a news report.
8) Prepare a flow chart to show the sequence...

**Level III: Application (applying without understanding is not effective)**

1) Construct a model to demonstrate using it.
2) Make a display to illustrate one event.
3) Make a collection about...
4) Design a relief map to include relevant information about an event.
5) Scan a collection of photographs to illustrate a particular aspect of the study.
6) Create a mural to depict...
Bloom’s Taxonomy

QUESTION STARTERS

**LEVEL IV: ANALYSIS**
1) What are the component parts of...?
2) What steps are important in the process of...?
3) If...then...
4) What other conclusions can you reach about...that have not been mentioned?
5) The difference between the fact and the hypothesis is...
6) The solution would be to...
7) What is the relationship between ...and...?

**LEVEL IV: ANALYSIS**
1) Design a questionnaire about...
2) Conduct an investigation to produce...
3) Make a flow chart to show...
4) Construct a graph to show...
5) Put on a play about...
6) Review...in terms of identified criteria.
7) Prepare a report about the area of study.

**LEVEL V: SYNTHESIS**
1) Can you design a...?
2) Why not compose a song about...?
3) Why don’t you devise your own way to ...
4) Can you create new and unusual uses for...
5) Can you develop a proposal for...?
6) How would you deal with...?
7) Invent a scheme that would...

**LEVEL V: SYNTHESIS**
1) Create a model that shows your new ideas.
2) Devise an original plan or experiment for...
3) Finish the incomplete...
4) Make a hypothesis about...
5) Change...so that it will...
6) Propose a method to...
7) Prescribe a way to...
8) Give the book a new title.

**Level VI: EVALUATION**
1) In your opinion...
2) Appraise the chances for...
3) Grade or rank the...
4) What do you think should be the outcome?
5) What solution do you favor and why?
6) Which systems are best? Worst?
7) Rate the relative value of these ideas to...
8) Which is the better bargain?

**Level VI: EVALUATION**
1) Prepare a list of criteria you would use to judge a... Indicate priority ratings you would give.
2) Conduct a debate about an issue.
3) Prepare an annotated bibliography...
4) Form a discussion panel on the topic...
5) Prepare a case to present your opinions about...
6) List some common assumptions about... Rationalize your reactions.
Additional Resources for Cluster Group Leaders

Below are additional resources that leadership teams might find helpful for the topics listed.

**Resources for Assessment:**

*Looking Together at Student Work* by Blythe, Allen, Powell 0807738557

This book is a companion guide to the video, *Looking at Student Work: A Window Into the Classroom* published by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. The book and video deal with how teachers can collaboratively look at student work and develop classroom practices based on the work.

**Resources for Communication Skills:**

[http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest102.html](http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest102.html)

This is a link to an article about effective communication skills. The article provides suggestions for school leaders who want to increase the effectiveness of those interactions.

**Resources for Leadership Skills:**

*Developing the Leaders Around You*, John Maxwell 0840767471

The author, who is considered one of the nation’s leading figures in the area of personal and corporate leadership development, turns his attention to the art of developing leadership capabilities in the people who surround you. He focuses on these key objectives: developing leadership within oneself, developing leadership within associates, and thereby maximizing the potential of all human assets within any organization, regardless of its size or nature.

*Developing the Leader Within You*, John Maxwell 0840767447

The author examines the differences between leadership styles, outlining principles for inspiring, motivating, and influencing others. These principles can be used in any organization to foster integrity and self-discipline and bring a positive change. It also allows readers to examine how to be effective in the highest calling of leadership by understanding the five characteristics that set “leader managers” apart...

*Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*, Gardner 0465082807

*Leading Minds* addresses a crucial and often ignored component of leadership -- the mind. What distinguishes the mind of an effective leader, and what is the mentality of his or her followers? Gardner links the study of creativity with the study of leadership to demonstrate the many similarities between traditional creators (artists and scientists) and leaders in business, politics and the military.

*Leading with Heart*, Kzyzeroski 0446676780

Coach Krzyzewski of Duke University has written a great book for leaders in business, sports, or any other field. Each chapter contains excellent instruction for anyone who is interested in building teamwork and developing leadership. Coach Krzyzewski has succeeded on the basketball court and has shown us through his development of young men that, while he is devoted to the goal of winning, for him, winning is more than just scoring more points at the end of a night. For him, developing and teaching young men is the ultimate goal.

**Resources for Mentoring:**

*The Teacher Mentor Training and Support Kit*, Teachersmentors.com

This Mentor Training Kit gives you everything you need to design and lead your own initial and ongoing mentor training and mentor support system

**Resources for Student Work/Assignments:**

http://web.mit.edu/writing/Faculty/createeffective.html
This site offers guidelines for crafting effective writing assignments for your students. Also included are tips for checking the assignment and sequencing of multiple writing assignments.

**Resources for Teambuilding:**

*Fish!,* Stephen C. Lundin 0786866020
This is a management parable that draws its lesson from an unlikely source - this time it’s the fun-loving fishmongers at Seattle’s Pike Place Market. *Fish!* aims to help employees find their way to a fun and happy workplace. The book, with prescriptions such as “Choose Your Attitude,” “Make Their Day,” and “Be Present” offer a good dose of worthwhile motivational management techniques.

*TEAM Handbook*, Brian Joiner, Peter Scholtes, Barbara Hearbel 1884731112
An easy-to-use, comprehensive reference book that can be read and applied by all who are involved with teams. This is a book made by team members for team builders. It has a lot of empty space allowing the reader to make notes. It was written so anyone can comprehend the steps needed to build and manage successful teams.

*Accounting for Diversity in Team Training*

*The Apollo Syndrome*
http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk/tt/h-articl/apollo.htm

Article on Decision-Making from *Why Teams Don’t Work* by Robbins/Finley
http://www.quality.org/TQM-MSI/decisions.finley.txt

Article on Leadership from *Why Teams Don’t Work* by Robbins/Finley
http://www.quality.org/TQM-MSI/leadership.mfinley.txt

*Building a Committed Team*
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrc/areas/issues/educatrs/leadership/le200.htm

*Confidence and Team Building Games*
U.S. Scouting Service Project
http://www.us scouts.org/games/game_t.html

*Motivation in High Functioning Teams*
http://www.teambuildinginc.com/article_teammotivation.htm

*Team Building: Developing a Productive Team*
http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/Misc/cc352.htm

*Teams in Schools*
http://www.ncrel.org/skrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadership/le200.htm

*The Participative Design Approach to building*
http://www.worldtrans.org/qual/workplac.html

**Resources for Multiple Intelligences:**

http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm
Provides overview of multiple intelligences with additional resources

**Resources for Thinking:**

http://www.tamucc.edu/~gblalock/courses/3360/readings/13ways.htm
A list of the 13 different ways that people think. Teachers should refer to this list when developing assignments to ensure that students are getting a fairly balanced opportunity to develop each of the types of thinking.

**Resources for Cooperative Learning:**

http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9211/cooperative.htm - Article on benefits of cooperative learning and ways in which it can be implemented
http://www.ericdigests.org/1995-1/elements.htm - Essential elements for effective cooperative learning in the classroom

**Resources for Instruction:**

*Best Practice Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools* (second edition), Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde 0325007446
A resource for research based instructional ideas

*Better Answers*, Cole 1571103414
Strategies for developing written constructed responses – appropriate for all grades

*Classroom Instruction That Works: Research Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, Marzano, Pickering, Pollock 0871205041
This book spells out in plain language what works. It explains each strategy in detail, gives examples, and summarizes the research on the effectiveness of each strategy.

*A Handbook for Classroom Instruction that Works*, Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering, Gaddy 087120522X
A companion book to *Classroom Instruction That Works*

*Effective Reading Strategies: Teaching Children Who Find Reading Difficult*, Rasinski, Padak 0130996696
Strategies and background information explaining how children learn to read and to best meet student needs

*Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies; Modeling What Good Readers Do*, Wilhelm 0439218594

*I Read It, But I Don’t Get It; Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*, Tovan 157110089X

*Phonemic Awareness: Playing With Sounds to Strengthen Beginning Reading Skills (Phonemic Awareness)*, Fitzpatrick 1574712314
Strategies appropriate for Pre-K through 2nd grade
Resources for Reading/Language Arts Strategies:

http://www.rogerfarr.com/
Strategies for supporting students in asking themselves questions and thinking about what they are reading.

http://www.allamericareads.org/program/strategies.htm - Lessons developed by high school teachers for a specific novel based on Kylene Beers’ strategies – These strategies could be applied to any text.

Tips for Communicating Effectively

For cluster groups to move forward, clear, effective communication is essential. The leader who clearly expresses a message in a way that initiates positive and committed responses has learned to leverage knowledge, emotion, and interpersonal energy and is more likely to achieve lead the cluster in achieving their goals.

Leaders want to engage their team members in purposeful discussions while keeping discussions on track, moving forward, and staying focused on increasing student
achievement through improved instructional practice. There are four response strategies leaders can use, which will facilitate this process: applied questioning, valet parking, summarizing, and paraphrasing.

The communication skills presented in this section apply to all five steps in the effective learning diagram presented in Section 2 of the Handbook.

Here are tips for communicating effectively in cluster groups:

- Increase objective listening capacity by:
  - Not making value judgments
  - Allowing the speaker to express his or her point fully before reacting
  - Not second-guessing the message of the speaker
  - Separating objective from subjective data
  - Recognizing feelings and emotions in the speaker’s message

- Hone listening skills by acknowledging the listener in the following ways:
  - Nodding your head
  - Picking up on the last word or two of the speaker’s sentence and using it to reinforce the content
  - Saying things such as “That’s good. Does anyone else have anything to add?”
  - Maintaining eye contact and an open body position

Applied Questioning:

- Questions can clarify, draw out, direct, and lead others to higher levels of understanding.
- Questions always shift the energy from self to others. Leaders who artfully apply that knowledge enlist greater participation.
- Questions can also be used to shift direction and redirect emotion.

Phrases that initiate questioning include:

- “Tell us what you agree or disagree with regarding…”
- “How do you perceive the following…”

Here are two examples of applied questioning:

Example 1

As a part of a cluster growth plan helping students identify “main idea” and supporting the school goal of increasing reading comprehension, the cluster group is identifying the key elements to be included in a pre-test on main idea. The topic digresses into how too many assessments are being given. The leader is uneasy because the discussion is gaining more negative emotion. She uses a question to redirect. The question restates the goal: “How can we use the data to better focus our teaching and save instructional time?”

-- Cluster members identifying student weaknesses from pre-test results --
Example 2

As a part of teaching a strategy for identifying "main idea," the cluster leader is reviewing the use of running records as a means of tracking student growth in identifying main idea. Several teachers begin another discussion about the shortage of leveled reading books. The leader redirects the group with a question: "Who can tell me why we must perfect our application of running records?" After that, everyone refocused. The topic of the book shortage was "valet parked" for another meeting.

-- Cluster members developing running records for classroom application --

Valet Parking Issues:

When members bring up other topics that are unrelated to the goals of the current meeting, a strategy must be in place for how to deal with this event. One such strategy is called "valet parking" the issue. When unrelated topics come up, the leader can valet park them for future agenda or other form of action. This is a way to validate members’ input without losing sight of the agenda. The idea of "valet parking" implies that the topic can be retrieved as needed.

Example

A cluster is focusing on ways to improve students’ ability to solve multi-step problems on the upcoming statewide test. Cluster members begin veering off to students’ inability to comprehend written word problems. The leader could see that this was an important item, so she said, "I would like to valet park this topic for now so that we can focus and complete our plans to prepare our students for solving multi-step problems. At the end of the meeting today, we will identify where in our long-range plan on solving multi-step problems we can add some math reading comprehension strategies."

-- Cluster members obtain new learning multi-step problem solving and how it’s tested on the state-wide assessment and identify a math reading comprehension issue to be further explored in future cluster meetings --

Summarizing:

Summarizing requires the leader to listen and respond for accuracy and emphasis. Summarizing information ensures that everyone in the discussion is clear about what transpired.

Here are some examples of starter phrases that lead to a summarizing statement:

- “There seem to be some key ideas expressed here...”
- “If I understand you, you feel this way about [describe]...”
- “I think we agree on this. What we are saying is that we intend to...”
- “In talking about this issue, we have come up with three main points...”
Paraphrasing:

Paraphrasing is restating what the other person said in an objective manner even when emotions are interfering. This form of communication can be applied when there is a need to sort out fact from emotion and excitement.

Here are some sample phrases that can be used in the paraphrasing process:

- “You are saying…”
- “In other words…”
- “I gather that…”
- “If I understand what you are saying…”
- “You’re suggesting…”
- “As you…”
- “So, you…”
- “So there are a couple of things going on…”
- “You’re hoping…”
- “You’re thinking…”
- “You’re wanting…”
- “You’re wondering…”
- “Recapping…”
- “You’re feeling…”

Guided Practice for Paraphrasing:

When a statement sends mixed messages or appears to contain strong emotions, it may be necessary to paraphrase and label the statement for clarity. This means separating out the emotion from the concern.

When the statement is emotionally charged, the listener needs to validate the emotion or provide empathy and then give the content. The paraphrasing template below provides a starting point:

“You are feeling [empathy] because [content.]”

An Example Using the Template

The statement is, “I can’t stand working with those students because they are downright rude!”

The paraphrase could be: “You’re feeling angry (empathy) because the students are not listening to what you say.” (content)

Paraphrasing helps separate the content from the emotion. The word rude is emotionally strong and carries a negative connotation, yet there is probably truth somewhere in what the teacher is trying to say. The listener must exercise empathy and get to the facts.

Once the facts are uncovered, it is easier for the listener to begin to problem-solve. Probing for more information is also a good idea for defusing a situation. Asking for more information such as, “Tell me more,” helps to further refocus the emotional person. “Yeah, they come in and they sit down and talk even after I start my lesson.” Now the content is clearly disclosed so there is an opportunity for problem-solving. The listener can then ask a clarifying question: “What do you do to start the lesson?” This question begins the problem-solving process.
Example of Paraphrasing Dialogue

**Person 1:** “I’m not sure I liked this lesson strategy because the students got frustrated when they couldn’t find the main idea from the confusing details.”

**Person 2:** “So you didn’t like it because the students were confused by some of the choices they had.”

**Person 1:** “Yeah, I thought that the passages that I gave them had too many confusing details without a real point or one central main idea and that lesson was just confusing for everyone.”

**Person 2:** “So the lesson was confusing because of the piece of reading material. What type of reading passage would have made the lesson more successful?”

**Person 1:** “Maybe it would have worked better if I had a piece of reading material that had one central idea, the way we practiced in cluster last week. I think the strategy might have worked more smoothly if we had a reading passage more like the one we practiced with.”

**Person 2:** “Perhaps we should spend time in cluster clarifying and identifying the reading material needed for students to best learn main idea/detail skills with these strategies.”

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**Evaluating Cluster Outcomes KEY**

**Directions:**

1) Analyze the following examples of cluster outcomes. Using the information from the training and the STEPS for Effective Learning, identify relative strengths and weaknesses of each. Ask:

   a) What are the teachers learning? and
   b) What change in student learning will you be able to observe this week as a result of this cluster?

2) As time permits, go back and make improvements as needed.

**By the end of the meeting the following should be accomplished:**

1) By the end of the meeting, the teachers will develop the So What? strategy for immediate implementation using their content area text.

   **Proficient Example**

   It is implied that there is an identified area of student need which is inferences and teachers are learning a subject-specific instructional strategy to meet this need.
Possible improvement(s)

The area of student need would be explicitly stated. “By the end of the meeting, teachers will develop the So What? strategy to improve students’ inferences as measured by the criteria presented during the cluster.”

2) By the end of the meeting, the teachers will research new ways to record student growth in reading comprehension aligned to standards.

Weak Example:

Researching ways to record student growth is not a good use of cluster time, but rather is “plan time” as it relates to everyday management issues related to teaching. Each cluster should provide new learning for teachers focused on a specific student need.

Possible improvement

This outcome can not be improved since it is not a valid use of cluster time.

3) Teachers will analyze and reflect on how they applied the text-to-text strategy in their classrooms last week.

Weak Example

Without skillful leadership, this outcome will lead itself to a “show and tell” scenario where teachers spend time sharing what they did and how it worked (or didn’t), as opposed to the impact of the strategy on student achievement. In addition it is unclear what the new learning for teachers will be that they will take back to the classroom for implementation.

Possible Improvement

“Using student work, teachers will analyze the impact of the text-to-text strategy on students’ inferences. Master teacher will model modifications to the strategy focusing on the needs of lower performing students and assist teachers in developing for their own implementation.”

Note: A master teacher would have previously identified needs of lower performing students from being in members’ classrooms and from his/her field testing.

4) By the end of the meeting, a lesson using the visualization strategy for improving students’ predictions will be collaboratively constructed and subsequently taught during the following week while master teachers observe.

Proficient Example

Teachers learn a new strategy focused on a specific student need and develop it for immediate application in the classroom.

Possible Improvement

Continue outcome by stating the specific measurement tool for evaluating students’ predictions.
5) By the end of the meeting, teachers will develop inter-rater reliability by scoring the district writing assessments.

**Weak Example**

While it is important for cluster members to develop inter-rater reliability when applying rubrics, this is not an appropriate activity for clusters, but rather an activity for a staff meeting or grade level planning meeting.

6) Members will develop a class profile based on the mid-year writing assessment and determine the top three areas of instructional need.

**Weak Example**

Teachers should come to cluster with areas of student need already identified, and the Master/Mentor should present a strategy targeted to that need for teachers to implement in their classroom. Developing a class profile should be done outside of cluster, during planning time or departmental meetings as preparation for effective cluster work. Analysis of student work and identification of student needs to determine the focus of clusters (cluster goals) should occur in Leadership Team Meetings. The follow-up from the Leadership Team Meeting would be for Master/Mentor teachers to communicate these goals to cluster members, field test a research based strategy to target the identified need and then model the strategy in cluster. *(Remember every cluster outcome should include new learning for teachers to take back and implement in their classroom.)*

**Possible Improvement**

“Cluster will identify areas of weakness in student writing. Master will model “Show vs. Tell” to improve students’ Voice, for teachers to develop and implement in their classroom the following week.”

7) By the end of the meeting, teachers will be able to develop word sorts that are used to increase word recognition and contextual meaning to implement in a lesson this week.

**Proficient Example**

The new learning for teachers is identified along with the specific student need being addressed.

**Possible Improvement**

Include how the impact of the new learning on student achievement will be measured.

8) Teachers will experience a modeled problem-solving lesson using a specific differentiated strategy that includes all students.

**Incomplete Example**

After teachers experience the differentiation, what will they do? Also, what is the specific student need being targeted by the strategy? *(Note: Be careful that the reason*
teachers are observing is to gain an instructional strategy that would be appropriate for their classroom rather than a lesson on curriculum.

Possible Improvement

“ Teachers will develop a problem solving strategy incorporating differentiated instructional practices to improve all students’ abilities to identify the correct operation. “

9) By the end of the meeting, teachers will be able to identify various levels of questions using Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Weak Example

What will teachers do with what they learn? How will they apply it in their classrooms to target a specific student need? This outcome is focused more on teacher methodology than on a specific student need.

Possible Improvement

“ By the end of the meeting, teachers will examine the levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy questions, observe the master teacher incorporating the various levels of questions in the “Paint a Picture” strategy focused on improving students’ voice in writing and develop questions they will model for students as they apply the “Paint a Picture” strategy to their writing.

10) By the end of the meeting, teachers will develop lesson objectives and ways to “explicitly communicate” them to students.

Incomplete Example

The development of learning objectives and ways to “explicitly communicate” them to students is a teacher methodology that should be embedded within the new learning in a cluster.

Possible Improvement

“ Teachers will develop the “Making a Pattern” strategy to improve students’ abilities to solve word problems and supported by the use of “explicitly communicated” learning objectives.”

11) By the end of the meeting, teachers will identify how the “during-reading” strategy modeled by the mentor teacher could be used in their classrooms while the mentor or master observe and provide feedback.

Fair Example

It is implied that teachers will develop the strategy and implement the strategy into their lessons. Further, observation by the mentor/master is planned for; however, this outcome does not include the specific student need being addressed. What is the purpose for teachers to implement the strategy?
Possible Improvement

“By the end of the meeting, teachers will develop the “during-reading” strategy to improve students’ identification of main idea in a non-fiction text as measured by students’ written responses.”

12) By the end of the meeting, a pre-reading strategy (Probable Passage) will be modeled and developed by teachers to improve students’ ability to identify the main idea as measured by criteria presented during cluster.

Exemplary Example

Teachers develop new learning focused on a specific student need and the impact of the strategy is measurable by specific criteria.
References


