

COMPONENTS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Teaching as a profession consists of a highly complex set of practices, which benefit from continued reflection and refinement. The components of professional practice reflect the research-based and validated components of teaching described in *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development 1996). They provide educators with a common language for talking about teaching and clear, concrete levels of performance for teachers to use in reflecting upon their work. The components of professional practice are based on the PRAXIS III: Classroom Performance Assessments criteria developed by Educational Testing Service and are aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and other standards for teachers.

The framework for teaching identifies 22 critical components of teaching. These components have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning. Although the framework is not the only possible approach to defining good teaching, the components seek to define what teachers should know and be able to do in the exercise of their profession.

The 22 critical components of professional practice are organized into four general domains: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. Each of the four domains of the framework refers to a distinct aspect of teaching. To some degree, the components within each domain form a coherent body of knowledge and skill, which can be the subject of focus independent of the other domains. There are also many points of connection across domains.

Domain 1 concerns Planning and Preparation. This includes knowing one's content, knowing one's students, knowing the resources available for teaching, selecting appropriate goals, designing instruction, and assessing student learning. Domain 2 concerns the Classroom Environment, and includes interpersonal relationships among the students and with the teacher, classroom routines and procedures, management of student behavior, and the use of physical space. Domain 3 addresses Instruction, and includes communicating clearly, using questioning and discussion skills, engaging students in learning, providing feedback to students, and responding to classroom events. Lastly, Domain 4 addresses Professional Responsibilities, and includes a teacher's skill in reflecting on teaching, communicating with families, attending to one's own professional growth, and contributing to the school and district.

Domains 2 and 3 describe those aspects of teaching that occur in the classroom, and may therefore be observed in a classroom observation. Domains 1 and 4, on the other hand, describe aspects of teaching that happen either before or after the encounter with students. Some people find it helpful to think of this distinction as one of "on stage" and "off stage." Domains 2 and 3 are "on stage," while Domains 1 and 4 are "off stage," behind the scenes.

Educators in many settings have found the framework for teaching useful in structuring their efforts. Colleges of education use it to organize their courses and supervise their student teachers. School districts use it to plan mentoring and professional activities and to review their approaches to teacher evaluation. Individual teachers use it to reflect on their practice and to prepare for National Board certification.

