

# NEPF PERFORMANCE LEVELS AND STANDARDS EXPLANATION

## PERFORMANCE LEVELS:

1. Ineffective
2. Minimally Effective
3. Effective
4. Highly Effective

There are 4 Performance Levels for each of the Indicators. Performance levels are the descriptions of the specific teacher actions to achieve the Indicators.

Through the evaluation process, the teacher will demonstrate 1 of 4 levels of performance for each indicator. A teacher who is classified as *Ineffective* is Level 1, and a *Highly Effective* teacher is at Level 4

Although a teacher over time can make steady progress up through the levels, the Performance Levels are not defined in equal intervals. The distance between Level 2 (*Minimally Effective*) and Level 3 (*Effective*) is intentionally greater. To be designated an *Effective* teacher requires a considerable advance in competence from a designation of *Minimally Effective*. *Highly Effective* teachers reach **all** students in their class.

To receive an evaluation of *Ineffective*, a teacher demonstrates that there is no evidence that any student – or almost no students – are being well-served by instructional practice. For example, the evaluator finds that there is no evidence that the teacher attempts to activate students' initial understandings (Standard 1, Indicator 1), or there's no evidence that a teacher plans on-going learning opportunities based on evidence (Standard 5, Indicator 3). It may be that the evaluator notes that 1-2 students are being well-served, or showing evidence of what's being evaluated, but this is insufficient evidence for a teacher to obtain a score of Level 2.

A note for "**all**" students: To receive an evaluation of *Highly Effective*, a teacher needs to demonstrate that all the students in the class are being well-served by instruction. This is indeed a high bar which teachers may strive for but not fully reach. So if the evaluator, through direct observation, is able to judge that all but 1-2 students are being addressed with respect to the Indicator, then the teacher must demonstrate through other evidence sources that he or she has made every possible effort to reach **all** students in the class.

Taking a closer look at the Standards and Indicators. The 1st page shows all the Standards and all of the Indicators laid out. This is a useful guide for everybody to be able to see the Standards and Indicators on one single page.

On page 2 of the Standards, there are 4 separate headings. First column are the Indicators – What teachers need to demonstrate. The 2nd and 3rd columns are the evidence that the evaluator will use to determine the teacher level of performance. The last column provides description notes. These description notes are taken from the literature review.

Shown are mandatory and optional sources of evidence for the evaluator. Evaluators are required to collect at least 2 sources of evidence per indicator in order to evaluate teachers' performance. The primary mandatory source of evidence is direct evaluator observation. That is, the evaluator goes into the classroom and observes the teacher lesson in action for at least 20 minutes. The second mandatory evidence source varies according to Indicator. These optional evidence sources are also listed. For example one optional evidence source might be a lesson plan, a pre-or post-conference with a teacher, or looking at student work.

<b>Standard 1</b>	
<b>Indicator 1</b>	For the description notes, for example for Indicator 1, the descriptor points out that sometimes students' initial understandings could be in conflict with the new learning of the lesson. If these initial understandings are ignored, the understandings that the students develop can be very different from what the teacher intends. So it's really important – and this is derived from the literature – that teachers activate all students initial understanding of anything new that's intended to be learned.
<b>Indicator 2</b>	To each new learning situation, students bring a set of experiences, understandings, skills, and expectations that they have acquired both in and out of school. To connect new learning with prior knowledge, teachers need to not only take account of prior learning but also of the social and cultural prior knowledge with which students enter schools. This helps students meaningfully situate new learning within their own contexts.
<b>Indicator 3</b>	For the teacher to clarify the purpose and relevance of new learning, he or she needs to make the relevance explicit for all students and/or have students explore the relevance of the learning as part of the lesson, e.g., how the learning may relate to real-world situations. Students should be able to answer the question: What is the point of learning this?
<b>Indicator 4</b>	To build on initial understandings, teachers need to know what that initial understanding is for each student. Also, by keeping in mind the steps along the way from that beginning stage to the targeted learning, he or she can employ appropriate instructional techniques to promote conceptual change in student thinking.
<b>Looking at some performance levels more closely</b>	For example, at Level 4 in Indicator 1, the teacher needs to <i>fully</i> activate <i>all</i> students' initial understandings through the use of <i>multiple</i> methods or modes. (Remember <b>all</b> students means nearly all, and if teachers haven't managed to meet all students, then they need to show that they have done everything possible to reach all students). At Level 2 in Indicator 1, the language here from Level 4 is quite different: the teacher <i>inadequately</i> activates <i>most</i> students' initial understandings using <i>limited</i> methods or modes. An evaluator observing in this classroom would see that the teacher is <i>not</i> successfully activating most students' initial understandings and is using very limited methods or modes.
<b>Standard 2</b>	
<b>Indicator 1</b>	What does it mean by "cognitive abilities"? Cognitive abilities can include, but are not limited to, reasoning, planning, solving problems, evaluating, synthesizing, comprehending, and designing. "Skills" are the capacity or competence to perform a task. They can range from the simplest levels to higher levels, where students are asked to apply their knowledge and understandings in the context of problem solving, for example. The cognitive abilities and skills students develop should be increasingly content specific as students' learning develops. Cognitive abilities and skills are across the curriculum. Bear in mind, these Standards do not relate to one specific subject. They are Standards that reach across the curriculum. What's important in ELA and math is equally important in art and in other subjects.
<b>Indicator 2</b>	The task must be matched to the current level of learning that the student has reached in such a way that it provides a stretch for that student, not too much of a stretch, otherwise frustration will be the result, but sufficient stretch so that the student can engage in some productive struggle. The task for any classroom should not be a one-size-fits-all. No two students learn at the same rate or at the same pace. It's important in the context of the CCSS that no matter what the prior level students have reached, the next level is commensurate with what that student is able to do as a next reach in their cognitive and skill development.
<b>Indicator 3</b>	In the spirit of the CCSS and moving toward deeper learning, the teacher needs to design and structure tasks that allow for deep learning. That means tasks need to be connected to a larger sequence of learning (not just discrete entities on their own), connected to larger goals of the unit or the standard, and worth doing. Two good questions for the evaluator (and the teacher) to ask are: "Are the tasks I'm giving this student worth doing?" "Are they worth students' time?" Students spend only one year at a grade level and teachers need to make sure that students' time is not wasted. In terms of this particular indicator, there should be a progressive development of the student's cognitive abilities on an on-going basis.
<b>Looking at some performance levels more closely</b>	For example, in Indicator 3, Level 4, the teacher <i>effectively</i> structures <i>multiple level tasks</i> that advance all students' thinking and/or skills in <i>connected steps</i> during the course of a lesson and across multiple lessons. An evaluator will have to decide what is the best way in addition to direct observation to collect evidence that the teacher is actually structuring these multi-level tasks. That means that the tasks develop over a course of a lesson so that students are able to advance their cognitive abilities or their skills in connected steps ensuring success for <b>all</b> students.  In contrast, in Level 1 of Indicator 3, a teacher who is ineffective does none of that. He or she <i>does not</i> structure leveled tasks that advance <i>any</i> students' thinking in <i>connected steps</i> during a course of a lesson. Teachers need to ensure that whatever tasks are given to the students, the tasks make sense to the students and they advance learning progressively in a way that ensures students' success over the course of a lesson.

<b>Standard 3</b>	
<b>Indicator 1</b>	Extended discourse refers to students engaging in dialogue with others that supports meaning making. Discourse involves making arguments, explaining, reasoning, critiquing, and using logic and evidence to support or refute a claim. Discourse includes oral and written forms. Discourse can occur one-to-one, in small groups, and in whole class discussions.
<b>Indicator 2</b>	Multiple representations can be the same or different concepts, but they include a wide variety of representations both to learn and to make meaning of learning. For example, a representation could be student writing where the student is writing an essay or notes. (A longer list is provided in the Description/Notes column.) Representations are a variety of means that can be used by teachers to present information leading to the understanding of concepts and representations used by students to develop their understanding of concepts or skills.
<b>Indicator 3</b>	The teacher assists students to make their own connections and see relationships between prior and present knowledge/experience during the course of a lesson. This is different from indicators in Standard 1 in that it is the students who are making the connections as part of the meaning-making process.
<b>Indicator 4</b>	If the goals of the CCSS and NGSS are going to be met, we can no longer have students who don't talk to each other or who don't work with each other in classrooms. Students need to learn the skills of participation, learning from each other, and collaborating effectively on tasks in the context of a classroom which is positive and a safe environment for all, so that students feel free to take risks, to make mistakes, and to learn from the mistakes they make. This means that an evaluator (and teachers) will need to pay attention to teachers' classroom environments, the kind of culture that prevails in the classroom: the norms, the routines, expectations for behavior, and the way people (students and teachers) work with each other and treat each other. Communication patterns that are used in the classroom include how students are able to talk, give feedback to each other, and share ideas and information. The management of student behaviors: are students well-behaved, are they respectful to each other, are they aware of themselves and others in the classroom, and are they able to be responsive to one another in appropriate ways? The environment also includes the kinds of resources a teacher makes available: are they available in a way that students can take responsibility for their learning and do the work they need? Or are they just a series of resources that don't support students in any productive way? Lastly, the organization of physical space. Is the physical space organized in a way that the resources are accessible, that students have the opportunities to work together in pairs or small groups (or whole class teaching)? All of these are essential components and factors in the classroom environment, and they greatly influence the extent to which students learn.
<b>Looking at some performance levels more closely</b>	For example, in Indicator 3, Level 4 states that a teacher uses <i>various</i> and <i>effective</i> strategies to help <i>all</i> students. Contrast that with Level 3 where the teacher uses <i>sufficient</i> strategies to help <i>most</i> students... See that there are differences between Level 4 – the range of strategies ( <i>various</i> ) and that they're all effective, which is a judgment that the evaluator has to make – and Level 3 (e.g., <i>sufficient, most, generally</i> ). Level 3 is not quite at the degree of Level 4, but it's significantly advanced from Level 2, where the teacher is using <i>limited</i> strategies to help <i>some</i> or <i>most</i> students see connections, <i>only somewhat</i> furthering their understanding. These are judgments based on evidence the evaluator collects that he or she is going to have to use to determine the level of teacher performance against each of the Indicators.
<b>Standard 4</b>	
<b>Indicator 1</b>	This is information that is observed by the evaluator who will see how well the teacher communicates the purpose of the lesson, how the students will know if they're learning, and what the point of all the learning is.
<b>Indicator 2</b>	From research and practice, we know that self-monitoring is a hallmark in effective learning. This is also a core 21st century skill. The evaluator might observe the teacher providing some time for students' strategy use, talking to students about what they're doing in the lesson, and discussing with the students what's next. Students need to be clear about learning goals and performance criteria to engage in self-monitoring.
<b>Indicator 3</b>	The students should be observed taking action that supports their own self-monitoring. For example, they may be reorganizing information, creating a representation, or working with a peer to get more information. All of these actions will be under a student's agency based on their own self-monitoring processes.
<b>Looking at some performance levels more closely</b>	For example, in Indicator 1, Level 4 states students can <i>fully</i> explain what the intended learning goal of the lesson is, why they are learning it, and what successful performance looks like. An evaluator will have to decide what is the best way, in addition to direct observation, to collect evidence that the students can explain these ideas. This may include asking these questions to students directly.  Contrast that with Level 3 where only <i>most</i> students can <i>generally</i> explain the three ideas or <i>fully</i> explain <i>only</i> two of them. Level 3 is not quite at the degree of Level 4, but it's significantly advanced from Level 2, where students can <i>only vaguely</i> explain one or more of the three ideas.

## Standard 5

<b>Indicator 1</b>	<p>The evidence will have to show that the lesson plan for the lesson that the evaluator is going to observe is planned based on evidence that the teacher already has of the learning statuses that the students have achieved. So the lesson that is under observation builds on students' prior learning.</p>
<b>Indicator 2</b>	<p>It will need to be clear to the evaluator that how the teacher is collecting evidence is linked to or aligned with the goals of the lesson and how the students and the teacher will be assessing progress during the course of the lesson.</p>
<b>Indicator 3</b>	<p>Teachers need to both generate opportunities to gather evidence, and actually gather it over the course of the lesson (e.g., through listening to student talk with the learning goals in mind, looking at student work while students are engaged in it, and asking questions). The lesson needs to be structured with multiple opportunities to generate evidence and not rely on one source.</p>
<b>Indicator 4</b>	<p>After gathering and interpreting evidence, teachers need to act on it. Actions based on evidence can include: the continuation of the planned lesson, instructional adjustments, provision of feedback to students, and subsequent lesson planning.</p>
<b>Looking at some performance levels more closely</b>	<p>For example, in Indicator 1, Level 4 states that a teacher <i>consistently</i> plans <i>on-going</i> learning opportunities based on <i>substantial, current</i> evidence of <b>all</b> students' learning status. Contrast that with Level 3 where the teacher <i>frequently</i> plans based on <i>adequate</i> evidence of <i>most</i> students' learning status. See that there are differences between Level 4 - the regularity of planning with evidence (<i>consistently</i>), the quantity and timeliness of evidence (<i>substantial, current</i>) and that evidence used for planning is from everyone in the class (<b>all</b>). Level 3 is a significant advance on Level 2, where the teacher <i>only sometimes</i> plans with evidence from some students. And this evidence is <i>frequently outdated and/or limited</i>. To make a judgment about this indicator, evaluators need to review evidence from the pre/post teacher conferences and one other source, e.g., lesson plan, teacher notes, etc.</p>