

Teacher Candidate Assessment (TCA): An Instrument for Evaluating Professional Practice

Domain 1: Knowledge of the Learner						
		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 1.1	Focuses on learner assets, strengths, and interests		TC shows minimal focus on including students' assets, strengths, and interests to tailor their teaching, build relationships, and engage students.	TC focuses on learner assets, strengths, and interests and is beginning to apply this knowledge into their teaching, building relationships, and engaging students.	TC focuses on learner assets, strengths, and interests and uses this knowledge to tailor their teaching, build relationships, and engage students.	TC consistently focuses on learner assets, strengths, and interests, uses this knowledge to tailor their teaching, build relationships, and engage students. TC has developed strategies for reviewing, reflecting on, and updating their knowledge of their students' strengths, their interests.
Element 1.2	Affirms learners' identity(ties) and backgrounds in lessons		TC is still getting to know students and learning about their different identities and backgrounds.	TC's lessons show knowledge of students' identities and backgrounds and is beginning to affirm all students in the classroom setting. TC develops lessons that connect to their students.	TC's lessons consistently affirms and validates students' identities, backgrounds, and life experiences. TC develops lessons that connect to their students.	Candidate's lessons welcome students' identities, cultural backgrounds, and life experiences into the classroom and regularly develops lesson plans that connect to the lived experiences of students in the classroom.
Element 1.3	Applies their knowledge and understanding of adolescent development		TC is developing understanding of adolescent development (i.e.: limited focus on social emotional development of the students in the classroom, lessons are geared toward a different age group) and how to design instruction in consideration of the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural needs of adolescents.	TC can identify key aspects of adolescent development and, with support, apply them to build lessons that promote student learning. Instruction is designed in consideration of the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural needs of adolescents.	TC applies key aspects of adolescent development to build relationships and promote student learning in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students regardless of learning differences. Instruction is designed in consideration of the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural needs of adolescents.	TC consistently applies key aspects of adolescent development to consistently and deliberately build relationships and promote student learning in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students regardless of learning differences. Instruction is designed in consideration of the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural needs of adolescents.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 1.4	Shows responsiveness to the variety of student needs		TC is beginning to incorporate the varying needs and readiness levels of students in lesson design.	TC can identify the different learning needs of their students. With support, TC is beginning to make adjustments based on learner needs.	TC regularly responds to the needs of different learners by using some approaches to meet their needs.	TC regularly responds to the varied needs of learners and is making strides to individualize instruction and use a variety of approaches to meet student needs.

Domain 2: Knowledge of Content & Pedagogy (Application of Content)

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 2.1	Applies content knowledge in the development of equitable and inclusive learning experiences		TC is beginning to apply content knowledge in lessons. The ability to clarify relationships between concepts, and/or respond to student inquiries related to the content/identify student misconceptions is in the beginning stages.	TC applies content knowledge in lessons in ways that all students can engage. The TC regularly clarifies relationships between concepts, and/or responds to student inquiries related to the content/identifying student misconceptions but may struggle with questions requiring deeper insight.	TC applies content knowledge in lessons in ways that all students can engage. The TC is able to clarify relationships between concepts, respond to student inquiries related to the content/identify student misconceptions, and can answer simple and complex questions and correct misconceptions.	TC applies content knowledge in lessons in ways that all students can engage. The TC is able to clarify relationships between concepts, respond to student inquiries related to the content/identify student misconceptions, and can answer simple and complex questions and anticipate student misconceptions.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 2.2	Shows pedagogical knowledge		TC is at the beginning stages of using a range of pedagogical approaches to instruction. Lesson organization/pacing is frequently uneven. TC attempts to connect instruction to students' lives and interest in ways that support critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving to enhance student learning.	With coaching, TC uses a range of pedagogical approaches to instruction. Lesson organization is clear and is often appropriately paced. TC attempts to connect instruction to students' lives and interest in ways that support critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving to enhance student learning.	TC effectively uses a range of pedagogical approaches to instruction. Lesson organization is clear and appropriately paced. With support, TC connects instruction to students' lives and interests in ways that frequently support critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving to enhance student learning. TC begins to provide different explanations, representations, and perspectives.	TC has a strong command of pedagogical approaches to instruction. Lesson organization is clear and appropriately paced. TC connects instruction to students' lives and interest in ways that support critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving to enhance student learning. TC provides different explanations, representations, and perspectives.

Domain 3: Instructional Planning (OR Designing Instruction)

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 3.1	Sets clear goals & objectives		Goals & objectives are in the beginning stages and may lack clarity, suitability for students, flexibility in learning approaches, measurability, and/or focus on activities rather than the desired student outcomes (with "the end" in mind). The TC is beginning to connect goals and objectives to standards.	Goals & objectives are clear and reference standards. Learning is mostly accessible and intellectually challenging for all students.	Goals & objectives are clear and reference standards. Learning is accessible and intellectually challenging for all students. Often, multiple pathways and scaffolds for student learning are provided.	Goals & objectives are clear and reference standards. Learning is accessible and intellectually challenging for all students. Multiple pathways and scaffolds for student learning are provided as a regular part of instruction.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 3.2	Plans organized, thoughtful lessons		Lessons are in the beginning stages of development although the goals may be unclear and/or the activities may not follow an organized progression and/or have inadequate time allocations. Technology usage does not enhance student learning.	Lessons are organized with a clear beginning, middle and end. Activities are mostly connected to the learning objectives; formative assessments are frequently used to make sure students are on track. Candidate is beginning to use lesson closure to reinforce the learning or preview what is coming next. If used, technology enhances student learning.	Lessons align with goals, frequently featuring well-defined and organized activities that focus on student engagement and understanding. The flow of activities is even, with reasonable time allocation. The TC's plans make content relevant by considering students' prior learning, strengths, and interests. If used, technology enhances student learning.	Lessons demonstrate a consistently well-defined and maintained structure, ensuring engaging activities with a seamless and balanced progression. Time allocations are skillfully managed. Learning activities consistently and effectively make content highly relevant to learners. If used, technology enhances student learning.
Element 3.3	Plans for differentiated instruction		TC is in the beginning stages of planning activities and materials that consider diverse student learning needs, abilities, and strengths or learning outcomes. TC is beginning to promote active intellectual engagement.	With coaching, TC plans activities and materials that consider diverse student learning needs, abilities, and strengths or learning outcomes. Lessons promote active intellectual engagement; options exist for the variety of student learning needs in the classroom.	TC plans activities and materials that consider diverse student learning needs, abilities, and strengths or learning outcomes. Lessons promote active intellectual engagement; every student can access learning at the appropriate level.	All planned activities and materials are well suited for diverse learners and align with learning outcomes. They are designed to engage students in high-level cognitive tasks and are effectively differentiated.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 3.4	Offers autonomy-support and pathways to competence		TC is at the beginning stages of planning learning activities that prioritize student autonomy (e.g., non-coercive language, choice, revision). TC is developing pathways to competence (clear expectations, guidelines, explanations, self-assessment)	With coaching, TC plans learning activities that prioritize student autonomy and competence (planning includes clear expectations, guidelines, and explanations, self-assessment/reflection). Attention to supporting student perseverance and learning mindsets (e.g., open to revising one's thinking, have a "not yet" vs. "can't do" attitude) is sporadic.	Learning activities prioritize student autonomy and competence (planning includes clear expectations, guidelines, and explanations, student self-assessment and reflection). Plans frequently include approaches for supporting students' learning mindsets (e.g., open to revising one's thinking, have a "not yet" vs. "can't do" attitude) and perseverance.	All planned learning activities prioritize student need for autonomy and competence. Plans include approaches for supporting students' learning mindsets (e.g., open to revising one's thinking, have a "not yet" vs. "can't do" attitude) and perseverance. Systems are in place for students to have choices in modes of learning, revise their attempts at learning, and self-assess as part of goal setting.

Domain 4: Implementing Instruction

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 4.1	Communicates lesson content and expectations clearly		Clarity of TC's directions, procedures, and instructions are in the beginning stages and may be unclear to students or contain errors. Expectations may be ambiguous or unrealistic (too low or too high).	TC provides clear directions, procedures, and instructions and offers multiple pathways to them. With coaching, expectations are consistently provided, clear and realistic.	TC provides clear detailed directions and procedures in various forms. Expectations are clearly defined, communicated, revisited and appropriate.	TC provides students with clear, detailed directions and procedures in various forms. Expectations are communicated clearly and are appropriate. TC re-engages students as needed to clarify instructions. Student misconceptions are anticipated and addressed in instruction.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 4.2	Uses quality questioning and discussion techniques		TC uses only whole class discussion and/or asks simple questions with only one correct answer, limiting opportunities for student thinking. Discussions are led by the teacher, with little room for student interaction. Participation is limited to a few students, often the same ones.	With some support, TC fosters both small-group and whole class discussions. TC is developing the ability to ask questions that foster higher-order thinking. Processing time and quality of participation may be uneven.	TC fosters both small-group and whole class discussions. TC asks questions that foster higher-order thinking. Processing time is adequate and all students participate.	TC uses both small groups and whole class discussions. Questions cover a full spectrum of cognitive challenges, offering students a mix of both lower-order, closed-ended and higher-order, open-ended questions. Ample wait-time is provided. Students take active responsibility for discussion success and actively raise questions to each other and initiate topics. The teacher monitors and adjusts participation types to meaningfully include all students.
Element 4.3	Focuses on student engagement and cultivates a growth mindset and perseverance for all students		TC is beginning to use various instructional methods (e.g., meaningful hooks, engaging lectures, independent work, think-pair-share, small group, cooperative learning, whole class, reciprocal teaching, opportunities for autonomy/choice). TC is beginning to pay attention to student self-talk, encourage productive struggle, and show students how to set and track goals. The classroom can be described as "learning centered".	With support, TC uses several instructional methods with attempts at engaging all students. Students are sometimes encouraged to express their thoughts. TC pays attention to student self-talk, encourages productive struggle, and show students how to set goals and track goals. The classroom can be described as "learning centered".	TC effectively uses several instructional methods to engage all students, encouraging them to express their thoughts and make academic choices. TC encourages students to focus on positive self-talk and embrace productive struggle. Students receive asset-based formative feedback, set goals and track goals. Student questions and comments are built on and incorporated in instruction. The classroom can be described as "learning centered".	TC effectively uses various instructional methods to engage all students, encouraging them to express their thoughts and make academic choices. TC encourages and offers students ways to focus on positive self-talk and embrace productive struggle. Students receive asset-based formative feedback, set goals, track, and reflect/revise goals. Student questions and comments are built on and incorporated in instruction as an important aspect of the learning environment.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 4.4	Practices responsiveness and inclusivity through differentiated instruction		TC is learning how to modify the instructional plan in order to accommodate different learning needs. Lessons include some differentiation.	With support, TC makes attempts to modify the lesson as needed. Efforts to tailor learning for diverse students are evident and differentiation is included in the lesson plan.	TC smoothly makes adjustments to lessons based on student needs, provides different pathways to learning, and maintains high expectations. They personalize instruction effectively when required.	TC successfully makes major adjustments to a lesson when needed and the adjustments add value and rigor to the lesson. Students at all performance levels are provided opportunities for enrichment.
Element 4.5	Focuses on literacy skills with students and in their communication		TC is beginning to embed literacy skills (reading, writing, developing academic language, and speaking) in instruction. TC is beginning to instruct students in “reading” the “text” (i.e.: math problems, charts/graphs, artistic renderings).	TC consistently embeds literacy skills in instruction. TC is beginning to instruct students in “reading” the “text” (i.e.: math problems, charts/graphs, artistic renderings).	TC weaves literacy skills into most lessons and explicitly links them to instructional objectives and activities. TC actively supports the “reading” of “text” (i.e.: math problems, charts/graphs, artistic renderings).	TC shows that literacy skills are foundational to most lessons. Their visual representations, ideas expressed, decisions made, texts consulted, vocabulary developed, academic language used, and problems solved all reflect this infusion. Students can “read” the course “texts”.

Domain 5: Assessment						
		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 5.1	Aligns assessment with standards, learning objectives and instruction		TC's assessments are beginning to align with standards and the lesson's objectives. Criteria may be unclear.	TC's assessments align with standards, instruction, and lesson objectives. With support, adaptations of the assessments for individual needs are attempted. Criteria are clear and measurable.	TC's assessments align with instructional standards and objectives, including adaptations for different student groups. Assessment criteria and standards are clear and measurable.	TC's assessments and procedures clearly measure instructional objectives, are differentiated to meet individual student needs, and feature clear, measurable criteria that students can easily understand and apply.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 5.2	Designs thoughtful formative assessments and opportunities for self and peer assessment		TC is beginning to incorporate formative assessment throughout the lesson. TC is beginning to include student self-assessment and peer-assessment in the lesson or unit. Information gathered from assessments are inconsistently used.	TC incorporates formative assessment, self and peer assessment in the lesson or unit. With support, information from these assessments is used to inform plans for instruction and help students reflect on their thinking and how they are learning.	TC effectively uses a variety of formative assessments as well as self and peer assessment. TC uses information from these assessments to help students reflect on their thinking, growth, and learning processes and plan instruction.	TC uses well-designed formative, self and peer assessments and clearly articulates in instructional plans and includes student as well as teacher use of the assessment information.
Element 5.3	Includes accommodations for students' learning needs		TC is learning about the needs of learners in their care, as well as what accommodations can be provided.	TC is aware of the needs of learners in their care; with coaching, TC is beginning to provide accommodations throughout instruction and assessments.	TC plans for differentiated assessments and/or accommodations and provides them for specific students when required.	TC regularly plans and provides differentiated assessments and accommodations for students and updates their assessment methods in response to students' needs.
Element 5.4	Provides helpful and timely feedback on assessment		TC rarely offers constructive feedback or timely responses, leaving students without clear guidance for improvement. There is an overreliance on non-specific praise (e.g., "Good job!" or "You're so smart!").	TC offers constructive feedback. Response to student work is timely and provides clear guidance for improvement. At times, feedback might be overly general and could overemphasize praise. In-class opportunities are provided for students to make use of the feedback.	TC provides students with timely and accurate feedback, focusing on their efforts, growth, and accomplishments. Praise, when given, is specific, sincere, and carefully considered. In-class opportunities are provided and students are expected to make use of the feedback.	TC consistently gives timely feedback focused on student achievements and effort. In-class opportunities are provided for students to regularly apply this feedback in their learning, showing increased motivation and effort.

Domain 6: Learning Environment

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 6.1	Builds trusting teacher-student relationships		TC is beginning to establish rapport with students. TC knows the names of all students and can pronounce them accurately. However, interactions suggest limited understanding of students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and developmental levels. TC actively works to make sure all learners are included in the classroom community.	With support, TC has established rapport with students. TC knows the names of all students and can pronounce them accurately. Interactions increasingly suggest understanding of students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and developmental levels. All learners are included in the classroom community.	TC has built a strong rapport with most students, ensuring equitable, appropriate interactions that reflect understanding of their cultural and developmental needs. They encourage diverse student participation and foster an environment where students are willing to take intellectual risks. All learners are included in the classroom community.	TC has built strong relationships with all students, effectively motivating students to engage deeply with the content and exert their best effort. There is mutual respect and trust, with students actively contributing to each other's learning. All students are included, their voices heard, and encouraged to take intellectual risks.
Element 6.2	Promotes caring peer interactions and a welcoming classroom environment		TC is beginning to promote positive peer relationships, and student interactions. The classroom community is developing. With support, TC intervenes when conflict arises or to address behaviors.	TC promotes positive relationships among students. The classroom community feels positive. TC takes initiative to address instances of students showing apathy towards peers, or disregarding peers' feelings and making hurtful remarks.	TC helps students develop supportive and respectful relationships with one another. TC is attentive and responsive when conflict arises, problematic statements are made, or behaviors need to be addressed. The classroom feels welcoming and inclusive; the TC maintains student dignity.	TC helps students develop positive relationships with one another. Students respectfully interact with one another and the TC's corrections are clear, brief, and helpful. The classroom community is welcoming.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 6.3	Uses practices that cultivate an organized, supportive, and predictable learning environment		<p>TC is beginning to establish all the following practices that support learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom expectations - Routines and procedures - Clear communication of expectations for transitions and management of materials 	<p>The classroom environment is predictable. With support, TC has established the following practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom expectations - Routines and procedures - Clear communication of expectations for transitions and management of materials 	<p>The classroom environment is predictable. TC has successfully established these practices and students show buy-in of these practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom expectations - Routines and procedures - Clear communication of expectations for transitions and management of materials 	<p>The classroom environment is predictable. TC and students work collaboratively on these practices. The class collectively reflects and shares feedback on how these practices are going making changes when the need arises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom expectations - Routines and procedures - Clear communication of expectations for transitions and management of materials
Element 6.4	Communicates with families		<p>TC is beginning to communicate with families. TC responds to family concerns in a timely manner.</p>	<p>With support, TC communicates with families about the curriculum, behavioral expectations, and student progress. TC is beginning to show awareness of cultural differences, family structures, or socioeconomic backgrounds when communicating with families. TC responds to family concerns with kindness and in a timely manner.</p>	<p>TC provides frequent and appropriate information to families about the curriculum and behavioral expectations and conveys information about individual student progress in a manner that is sensitive to issues of family diversity. They make some attempts to engage families in the instructional program. TC responds to family concerns with kindness and in a timely manner.</p>	<p>TC consistently communicates with families in a way that supports diversity and keeps them informed about classroom activities. Students play a role in this effective communication. The teacher addresses family concerns with professional and cultural awareness and successfully engages families in the instructional program.</p>

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 6.5	Uses positive and encouraging responses to student behaviors and challenging situations		TC is beginning to address student behavior. With support, TC practices responding to challenging situations.	With support, TC addresses student behavior and challenging situations although their response might be inconsistent (i.e.: too punitive or lenient). Overall, responses are positive and encouraging and preserve student dignity and the classroom environment.	TC is aware of what happens in the classroom. They have systems in place to respond and prevent behaviors that interrupt learning and the building of positive relationships. Their approaches are proactive, positive, and equitable, showing their knowledge of their students.	TC has a robust system of monitoring student behavior. They have a solid system of preventing and intervening when disruption occurs and their system includes student voice. They focus on restorative practices that do not reproduce the systemic inequities that affect educational systems.

Domain 7: Professional Dispositions

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 7.1	Engages in self-reflection and self-assessment to improve teaching practice		TC is beginning to examine whether a lesson was effective or achieved its instructional goals. TC can articulate areas of improvement after teaching a lesson.	TC can reflect and identify some aspects of a lesson's effectiveness and the extent to which instructional objectives were met. TC can articulate areas of improvement after teaching a lesson.	TC regularly reflects on their teaching and accurately evaluates the success of lessons in meeting their objectives, can cite specific examples, and is receptive to ideas for practice.	TC has developed a practice of reflection on teaching and makes a thoughtful and accurate assessment of a lesson's effectiveness and the extent to which it achieved its instructional objectives, citing many specific examples from the lesson and weighing the relative strengths of each. They actively seek ways to improve their practice.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 7.2	Manages assumptions and biases while being curious about students' identities and interests.		TC is in the beginning stages of getting to know students and of learning about their identities and their interests. TC's actions are free from bias.	TC shows genuine interest in students and is curious about their lives, their identities, and their interests inside and outside of the classroom. TC manages assumptions and their actions are free from bias.	TC shows genuine interest in and curiosity of students and who they are. TC asks open questions and brings students' lives, identities, and interests into the classroom. TC manages assumptions and acknowledges bias but their actions are bias-free.	TC's genuine interest in their students and curiosity of students and who they are is apparent throughout the class period. TC asks open questions and brings students' lives, identities, and interests into the classroom. TC manages assumptions and acknowledges bias but their actions are bias-free.
Element 7.3	Communicates in constructive ways to convey their thoughts and ideas, resolve conflict, and/or problem solve		TC can regulate their emotions. They have beginning strategies for constructive communication when conflict arises, problems come up, or to share their ideas.	TC can regulate their emotions. Their approach to resolving conflict, conveying thoughts, or problem solving is effective. They model ways that promote a healthy understanding of emotions (identifying and labeling emotions, regulating emotions, and expressing emotions in healthy ways).	TC can regulate their emotions and respond in constructive ways. Their approach to resolving conflict, conveying thoughts, or problem solving is thoughtful. They actively model for students ways that promote a healthy understanding of emotions (identifying and labeling emotions, regulating emotions, and expressing emotions in healthy ways).	TC can respond to conflict and emotionally charged situations in constructive ways. Their approach to resolving conflict, conveying thoughts, or problem solving is thoughtful. They actively and openly model ways that promote a healthy understanding of emotions (identifying and labeling emotions, regulating emotions, and expressing emotions in healthy ways).
Element 7.4	Takes and uses feedback		There is little evidence of change based on feedback provided.	TC makes improvements to instruction/plans based on feedback provided. TC is beginning to seek out feedback.	TC seeks feedback from various stakeholders and makes improvements to instruction/plans based on feedback provided.	TC actively seeks feedback from various stakeholders, including colleagues, students, and parents, and makes improvements to instruction/plans based on feedback provided.

		Not Yet Observed	Beginner	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Element 7.5	Practices ethical conduct, integrity, and habits of professionalism		TC shows inconsistency regarding responsiveness and attentiveness to school and program expectations. Their interactions with others are not consistently characterized by honesty.	TC practices professional habits of honesty and integrity. TC is punctual at practicum site and adheres to school and program expectations.	TC practices professional habits of honesty and reliability. TC is punctual at practicum site and adheres to school and program expectations. Their interactions with others show high standards for honesty, confidentiality, and integrity.	TC is the model of responsiveness and reliability. They are counted on for the highest standards of honesty and integrity.
Element 7.6	Cultivates emotional resilience and takes responsibility for student learning		TC does not reflect on what they could have done differently when students have difficulty (blames students); lacks adaptability to changing circumstances; has a hard time recovering from setbacks; and generally does not exhibit a positive outlook.	TC adjusts instructional goals based on changing circumstances, taking responsibility for student learning. With coaching, TC can identify additional stakeholders (learners, family, colleagues), new methods, and engage in collaborative work to support all students.	TC adapts instruction based on changing circumstances, taking responsibility for student learning. TC can identify additional stakeholders (learners, family, colleagues), new methods, and engage in collaborative work to support all students.	TC adapts instruction and utilizes a variety of strategies based on changing circumstances, taking responsibility for student learning. TC regularly engages additional stakeholders (learners, family, colleagues) and engages in collaborative work to support all students. They don't allow setbacks to affect the quality of their teaching and relationships with students.