

Characteristics of Highly Effective Teaching and Learning

The following statements represent characteristics that are common to all content areas.

Learning Climate: a safe environment supported by the teacher in which high, clear expectations and positive relationships are fostered; active learning is promoted

Teacher Characteristics:

- a. creates learning environments where students are active participants as individuals and as members of collaborative groups
- b. motivates students and nurtures their desire to learn in a safe, healthy and supportive environment which develops compassion and mutual respect
- c. cultivates cross cultural understandings and the value of diversity
- d. encourages students to accept responsibility for their own learning and accommodates the diverse learning needs of all students
- e. displays effective and efficient classroom management that includes classroom routines that promote comfort, order and appropriate student behaviors
- f. provides students equitable access to technology, space, tools and time
- g. effectively allocates time for students to engage in hands-on experiences, discuss and process content, and make meaningful connections
- h. designs lessons that allow students to participate in empowering activities in which they understand that learning is a process and mistakes are a natural part of learning
- i. creates an environment where student work is valued, appreciated and used as a learning tool

Student Characteristics:

- a. accepts responsibility for his/her own learning
- b. actively participates and is authentically engaged
- c. collaborates/teams with other students
- d. exhibits a sense of accomplishment and confidence
- e. takes educational risks in class
- f. Practices and engages in safe, responsible and ethical use of technology

Classroom Assessment and Reflection: the teacher and student collaboratively gather information and reflect on learning through a systematic process that informs instruction

Teacher Characteristics:

- 1. Uses multiple methods to systematically gather data about student understanding and ability
- 2. Uses student work/data, observations of instruction, assignments and interactions with colleagues to reflect on and improve teaching practice
- 3. Revises instructional strategies based upon student achievement data
- 4. Uncovers students' prior understanding of the concepts to be addressed and addresses students' misconceptions/incomplete conceptions
- 5. Co-develops scoring guides/rubrics with students and provides adequate modeling to make clear the expectations for quality performance
- 6. Guides students to apply rubrics to assess their performance and identify improvement strategies
- 7. Provides regular and timely feedback to students and parents that moves learners forward
- 8. Allows students to use feedback to improve their work before a grade is assigned
- 9. Facilitates students in self- and peer-assessment
- 10. Reflects on instruction and makes adjustments as student learning occurs

Student Characteristics:

- 1. Recognizes what proficient work looks like and determines steps necessary for improving his/her work
- 2. Monitors progress toward reaching learning targets
- 3. Develops and/or uses scoring guides periodically to assess his/her own work or that of peers
- 4. Uses teacher and peer feedback to improve his/her work
- 5. Reflects on work and makes adjustments as learning occurs

Instructional Rigor and Student Engagement: a teacher supports and encourages a student's commitment to initiate and complete complex, inquiry-based learning requiring creative and critical thinking with attention to problem solving

Teacher Characteristics:

- 1 - Teacher instructs the complex processes, concepts and principles contained in state and national standards using differentiated strategies that make instruction accessible to all students.
- 2 - Teacher scaffolds instruction to help students reason and develop problem-solving strategies.
- 3 - Teacher orchestrates effective classroom discussions, questioning, and learning tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills.
- 4 - Teacher provides meaningful learning opportunities for students.
- 5 - Teacher challenges students to think deeply about problems and encourages/models a variety of approaches to a solution.
- 6 - Teacher integrates a variety of learning resources with classroom instruction to increase learning options.
- 7 - Teacher structures and facilitates ongoing formal and informal discussions based on a shared understanding of rules and discourse.
- 8 - Teacher integrates the application of inquiry skills into learning experiences.
- 9 - Teacher clarifies and shares with students learning intentions/targets and criteria for success.

Student Characteristics:

- 1 - Student articulates and understands learning intentions/targets and criteria for success.
- 2 - Student reads with understanding a variety of texts.
- 3 - Student applies and refines inquiry skills.

Instructional Relevance: a teacher's ability to facilitate learning experiences that are meaningful to students and prepare them for their futures.

Teacher Characteristics:

- 1-Teacher designs learning opportunities that allow students to participate in empowering activities in which they understand that learning is a process and mistakes are a natural part of the learning.
- 2-Teacher links concepts and key ideas to students' prior experiences and understandings, uses multiple representations, examples and explanations.
- 3-Teacher incorporates student experiences, interests and real-life situations in instruction.
- 4-Teacher selects and utilizes a variety of technology that support student learning.
- 5-Teacher effectively incorporates 21st Century Learning Skills that prepare students to meet future challenges.
- 6-Teacher works with other teachers to make connections between and among disciplines.
- 7-Teacher makes lesson connections to community, society, and current events.

Student Characteristics:

- 1-Student poses and responds to meaningful questions.
- 2-Student uses appropriate tools and techniques to gather, analyze and interpret information from quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- 3-Student develops descriptions, explanation, predictions, and models using evidence.
- 4-Student works collaboratively to address complex, authentic problems, which require innovative approaches to solve.
- 5-Student communicates knowledge and understanding in a variety of real-world forms.
- 6-Student communicates knowledge and understanding for a variety of purposes.

Knowledge of Content: a teacher's understanding and application of the current theories, principles, concepts and skills of a discipline.

Teacher Characteristics:

- √- Teacher demonstrates an understanding and in-depth knowledge of content and maintains an ability to convey this content to students.
- ↳- Teacher maintains on-going knowledge and awareness of current content developments.
- ↳- Teacher designs and implements standards-based courses/lessons/units using state and national standards.
- ↳- Teacher uses and promotes the understanding of appropriate content vocabulary.
- ∴- Teacher provides essential supports for students who are struggling with the content.
- ∴- Teacher accesses a rich repertoire of instructional practices, strategies, resources and applies them appropriately.

Student Characteristics:

- √- Student demonstrates growth in content knowledge.
- ↳- Student uses and seeks to expand appropriate content vocabulary.
- ↳- Student connects ideas across content areas.
- ↳- Student uses ideas in realistic problem solving situations.