

# Standards Performance Continuum Plus (SPC Plus)

A rubric for observing classroom enactments of critical sociocultural teaching practices

	Not Observed	Emerging	Developing	Enacting	Integrating
<b>Joint Productive Activity (JPA)</b> Teacher and Students Producing Together	Students work independently of one another.	Students are seated with a partner or group, AND (a) collaborate* or assist one another, OR (b) are instructed how to work in groups, OR (c) with a teacher who is not collaborating, or (d) contribute individual work, not requiring collaboration, to a joint product*.	The teacher and students collaborate on a joint product in a whole-class setting, OR students collaborate on a joint product in pairs or small groups.	The teacher and a small group of students collaborate on a joint product. (Teacher does not float.)	The teacher designs, enacts, and collaborates in joint productive activities that demonstrate skillful integration* of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Language &amp; Literacy Development (LLD)</b> Developing Language and Literacy Across the Curriculum	Instruction is dominated by teacher talk.	(a) The teacher explicitly models appropriate language; OR (b) students engage in brief, repetitive, or drill-like reading, writing, or speaking activities; OR (c) students engage in social talk while working.	The teacher provides structured opportunities for academic language development in sustained* (10 minutes or more) reading, writing, or speaking activities. (In a whole class arrangement, more than 50% of the students must participate. No turn taking.)	The teacher designs and enacts instructional activities that generate language expression and development of 'content vocabulary,*' AND assists* student language use or literacy development through questioning, rephrasing, or modeling. (Teacher can float.)	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in language development activities that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Contextualization (CTX)</b> Making Meaning – Connecting School to Students' Lives	Instruction includes some aspect of students' everyday school or classroom experience.	The teacher (a) connects student comments to academic concepts, OR (b) includes parents or community members in activities or instruction.	The teacher makes incidental* connections between student prior experience/knowledge from home, school, or community and the new activity/academic concepts.	By design, the teacher integrates* the new activity/academic concepts with students' prior knowledge from home, school, or community to connect everyday knowledge with school concepts.	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in contextualized activities that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Challenging Activities (CA)</b> Teaching Complex Thinking	Activities rely on repetition, recall, or duplication to produce factual or procedural information.	The teacher (a) accommodates students' varied ability levels, OR (b) sets and presents quality standards* for student performance, OR (c) provides students with feedback on their performance.	The teacher designs and enacts challenging activities* that connect instructional elements to academic content OR advance student understanding to more complex levels.	The teacher designs and enacts challenging activities with (a) clear standards/expectations, (b) performance feedback, AND (c) assistance* to develop more complex thinking. (The teacher can float.)	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in challenging activities that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Instructional Conversation (IC)</b> Teaching Through Conversation	Lecture or whole-class instruction predominates.	The teacher converses with student pairs or small groups on non-academic topics AND elicits student talk with questioning, listening, rephrasing, or modeling.	For less than 10 minutes, the teacher has either a planned or ad hoc conversation with a small group of students on an academic topic AND elicits student talk with questioning, listening, rephrasing, or modeling.	As a full participant, the teacher designs and enacts a planned instructional conversation* generating dialogue* (at least 10 minutes) with a clear academic goal*; listens carefully to assess and assist student understanding; AND questions students on their views*, judgements, or rationales.	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in instructional conversations that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Critical Stance (CS)</b> Teaching to Transform Inequities	Instruction reflects appropriate content-area standards.	The teacher designs instruction using variety,* which includes (a) using multiple sources of information,* OR (b) valuing and respecting multiple perspectives,* OR (c) supporting learning through multiple modalities.	Using variety, the teacher designs instruction that positions students to generate new knowledge* resulting in (a) original contributions, products, or expertise, OR (b) students' questioning and reflecting on issues from multiple perspectives.	The teacher designs or facilitates instruction that consciously* engages learners in (a) interrogating* conventional wisdom and practices, AND (b) reflecting* upon ramifications of such practices, AND (c) seeking actively to transform* inequities within their sphere of influence* within the classroom or larger community.	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in critical stance activities that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Modeling (M)</b> Learning Through Observation	Students begin working immediately following a verbal explanation.	The teacher, or a student, models behaviors, thinking processes, or procedures, but does not provide an opportunity for students to practice.	The teacher provides a model of a completed product that students then make, or models the behaviors, thinking processes, or procedures necessary for the task.	The teacher provides a model of a completed product that students then make, or models the behaviors, thinking processes, or procedures necessary for the task, AND assists students during practice.	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in modeling activities that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.
<b>Student-Directed Activity (SDA)</b> Encourage Student Decision Making	Students work on tasks designed and assigned by the teacher.	Students choose the subject or topic for an assigned task OR select from among activities developed by the teacher.	Students generate learning topics, learning activities, or projects based on self-directed interests, curiosity, or desired expertise.	Students complete self-generated learning activities or projects with teacher assistance and feedback.	The teacher designs, enacts, and assists in student directed activities that demonstrate skillful integration of multiple standards simultaneously.

# \*Glossary of Terms\*

**Academic goal:** In an Instructional Conversation, the academic goal is the development of thematic or conceptual understanding.

**Academic Language:** Language development should occur across the curriculum and in every subject area and English language lessons. Broadly academic language includes (a) word, sentence, and discourse language and literacy conventions in every discipline and (b) standard English when that is the goal of instruction.

**Assist/Assistance:** Assistance is a two-part process in which the teacher first assesses student knowledge and skills, then responsively assists development. Types of assistance may include: (a) Modeling – Providing a demonstration; (b) Feeding Back – Providing information about student performance as compared with a standard; (c) Contingency Management – Providing rewards or corrections contingent on student performance; (d) Questioning – Providing questions that guide students to advance their understanding; (e) Instructions – Providing clear verbal directions for performance; (f) Cognitive Structuring – Providing explanations or rules for proceeding; or (g) Task Structuring – Providing assistance by segmenting or sequencing portions of the task.

**Challenging Activities:** Activities that advance student understanding to more complex levels: (a) the “why” is addressed, not merely the “what” or the “how-to”; (b) the activity requires that students generate knowledge, or use or elaborate on information provided (apply, interpret, categorize, order, evaluate, summarize, synthesize, analyze, explore, experiment, determine cause and effect, formulate and solve problems, explore patterns, make conjectures, generalize, justify, make judgments); (c) the teacher connects the content or activity to a broader concept or abstract idea to advance student understanding; or (d) the teacher provides instruction in critical thinking, problem-solving, or metacognitive strategies.

**Collaboration:** Joint activity that results in shared ownership, authorship, use, or responsibility for a product. It can also include division of labor for coordinated sub-sections. However, mere turn-taking does not constitute a division of labor and, to be considered collaboration, an activity must include interaction between participants. Coordinated activities such as morning message or calisthenics are rated at the Emerging level for JPA.

**Consciously engages learners:** When teachers design learning tasks that invite students to reflect on academic concepts with real-world applications in mind, they position students to take ownership of their learning.

**Dialogue:** Conversation becomes dialogic when there is shared, rich, vibrant, authentic interaction between two or more people. Dialogue is not merely about talking. It is about collaborative thinking—a stance—where participants experiment, are mistaken, or change their views. Dialogue is a cumulative product emerging through a multi-voiced process of building on and refining ideas and lines of thought.

**Generate new knowledge:** When a teacher provides clear expectations, rich materials, and adequate time for students’ creativity and innovation in making meaning, they position students to generate new knowledge. Using information to perform complex tasks requires students to elaborate, analyze, evaluate, or synthesize/create.

**Incidental connections:** The teacher (a) makes connections between students’ experience or knowledge from home, school, or community and the new activity/information on an ad hoc basis to assist understanding or (b) prompts students to make connections.

**Inequities:** All forms of dehumanization that allow injustices or unfairness to manifest because of race, language, culture, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, (dis)abilities, or social class are inequitable. Inequities result from unequal power relationships inside and outside the classroom. Equity enables all learners to achieve their potential in the face of diverse circumstances through differentiated support focused on access, opportunities, and outcomes.

**Instructional Conversation (IC):** ICs are inclusive of all participants whose contributions are connected to, or extend, the comments and ideas of other participants. Instructional conversations focus on developing conceptual understandings rather than skills. They rely on broad topics, main ideas, themes, or concepts, are responsive to student contributions, include participation structures familiar to students, and have open-ended questions and sustained dialogue on a single topic. A precondition or precursor of discourse between teacher and students is extended to at least two speech turns each, with each turn consisting of more than just providing a known answer or fact in response to teacher questions.

**Integrates the new activity/academic concepts with what students already know from home, school, or community:** (a) students’ knowledge or experience is integrated with new academic content; (b) the basis of the instructional activity is personally relevant to students’ lives, or (c) students apply school knowledge in authentic activity.

**Integrating Level:** A single activity integrating three or more standards or enduring principles at the enacting level becomes an integrating activity.

**Interrogating conventional wisdom and practices:** Students critically analyze content and viewpoints from multiple perspectives considering such things as equity, fairness, or relationships of power and privilege.

**Multiple modalities:** The teacher provides or uses strategies that allow for alternative ways of knowing to be valued, for example, visual representations or kinesthetic performance. Teachers also use multiple modalities when they ask students to read and write or read and draw.

**Multiple sources of information:** The teacher provides students with multiple texts or genres, computer programs, websites, search engines, other students’ work, or bilingual resources that offer students—with a range of reading abilities—access to content through different levels of text difficulty.

**Original contributions, products, or expertise:** Teachers position students to make original contributions or products when learning tasks go beyond completing a worksheet and require them to represent learning with complex thinking skills, such as application, analysis, evaluation, or synthesis/creation of content and processes.

**Product:** Products may be tangible or intangible. Examples of tangible products are worksheets, essays, reports, pottery, word-web, a math problem solved on the blackboard, plays, skits, games, or debates. Intangible products are an achieved physical, psychological, or social state that integrates a series of actions. Intangible products may be found in such activities as story time, introductory lectures, or some ICs (the product is an accurate or elaborated understanding of a concept, procedure, idea), or some PE activities (increased physical fitness is the product, though not a joint product).

**Questioning views, judgment, or rationales:** In an Instructional Conversation, questioning students on their views, judgment, or rationales invites the use of students’ prior knowledge or experience related to the goal of the conversation. Deeper understandings result when teachers ask students to give evidence for their thinking.

**Reflection:** Students deepen their content learning when teachers ask students to reflect on connections they can make across content, personal experiences, and the broader community. In other words, students make text-to-self, text-to-text, or text-to-world connections.

**Reflecting upon ramifications:** Students reflect and focus upon the implications of maintaining or changing how things are done in learning or life. Students ask “why” questions and “what if” scenarios to understand the rationale behind concepts.

**Standards for student performance:** performance standards go beyond what to do and address the quality of student work. Standards may be in the form of a checklist or a rubric, or they may also be implicitly expressed through teacher expectations.

**Sustained (reading, writing, or speaking activities):** “Sustained” reading, writing, or speaking requires ten minutes or more of connected language use. Worksheets for which students write for 10+ minutes but for which the writing comprises brief responses rather than a single, extended, connected response, or speaking for which contributions are short responses to multiple questions but are not connected and built upon, are not considered sustained. Structured listening activities for students with limited English proficiency qualify for the Developing level of LLD.

**Transform inequities:** Students demonstrate awareness that academic learning impacts individuals or community life by using knowledge to address issues of inequality. Taking action with knowledge in one’s sphere of influence may include publishing, performances, or presentations to inform or influence a wider audience. Focused on developing equitable classrooms and societies, teachers build students’ capacities to act with more fairness, harmony, equity, and excellence as civically engaged citizens. A teacher asks students, “How does this make for a more just world?” while simultaneously teaching, “What is this source trying to get me to believe?” and “How does this source position me?”

**Values and respects multiple perspectives:** Using appropriate content standards, teachers use different points of view, value student voice or perspectives, strive to affirm diverse student identities and culture, or encourage multilingualism/multiculturalism.

**Variety in instruction:** Teachers use variety in teaching by employing multiple sources of information, perspectives, or modalities.

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