



Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development

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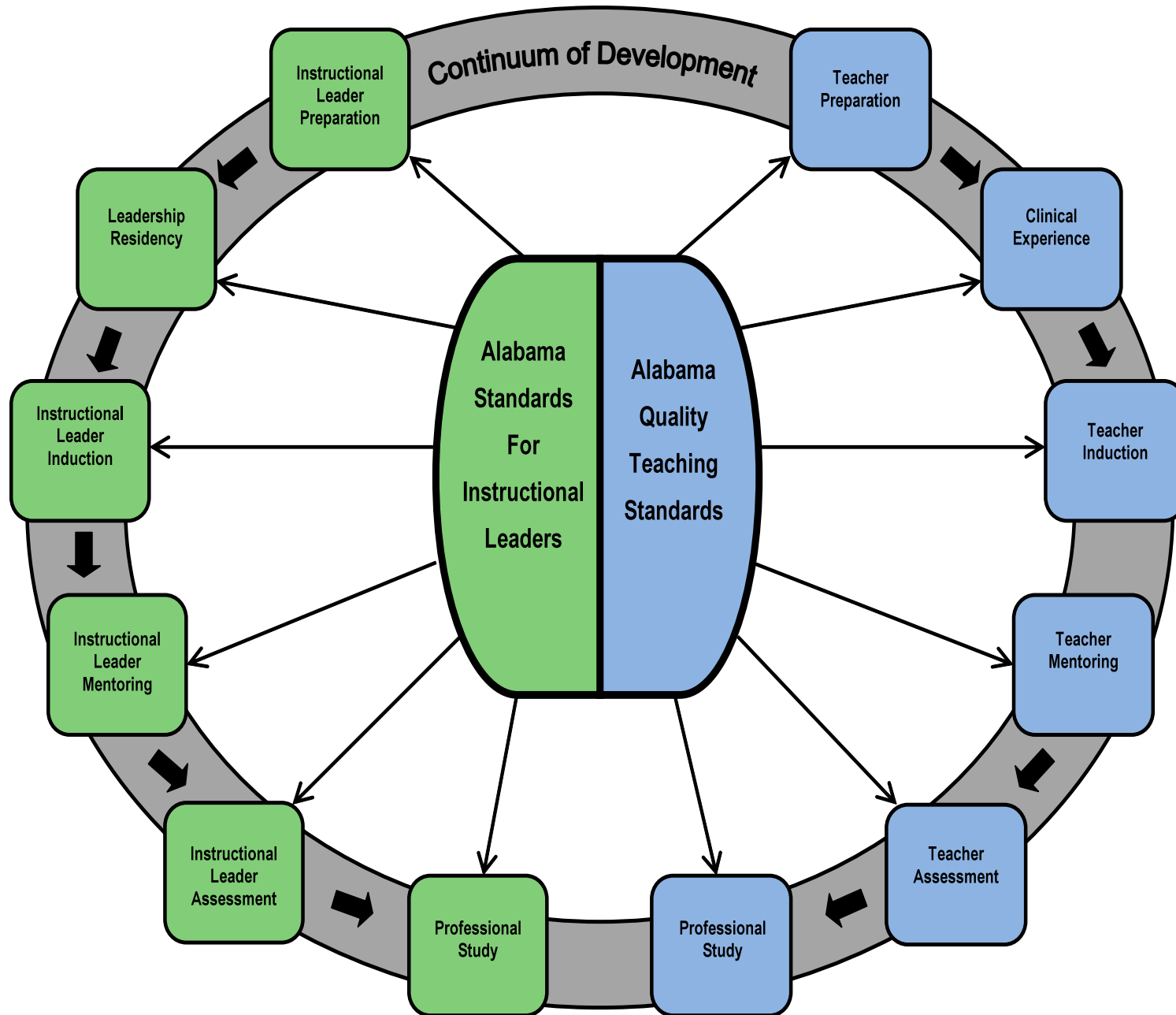
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The Common Core

The Key to a Standards-Driven Profession



Alabama Continuum of Teacher Development

The Governor's Commission on Quality Teaching (GCQT) commenced its work on January 17, 2006, with a charge from Governor Bob Riley "to examine, recommend, and work to implement laws, policies, and practices affecting teachers and teaching effectiveness to ensure student success in Alabama's public schools" and to "promote the aggressive recruitment, preparation, support, retention, and growth of quality teachers in order to raise student achievement in Alabama." The Alabama Quality Teaching Standards, which provide the framework for the Alabama Continuum of Teacher Development, were an early product of the Commission's work.

The Commission's work was informed by research on the relationship between teaching quality and increased student achievement. Early initiatives of the Commission focused on two critical pieces of its overall mission:

1. Improving the readiness of new teachers coming into the profession
2. Promoting the continual learning, growth, and effectiveness of teachers throughout their careers

Through the combined support of Governor Riley and State Superintendent of Education Dr. Joseph B. Morton and in conjunction with the New Teacher Center, the Commission created the Alabama Continuum of Teacher Development to help address and provide support for increased teacher learning and development through informed self-reflection.

Purpose of the Continuum

Based on the five Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS), which are listed elsewhere in this document, the Continuum articulates a shared vision and common language of teaching excellence to guide an individual's career-long development within an environment of collegial support. It is a tool for guiding and supporting teachers in the use of reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting for professional learning and growth.

Specifically, the Continuum is intended to support meaningful reflective conversations among teachers, mentors, coaches, and administrators. It supports teachers in setting professional goals and pursuing professional development to reach those goals. It also serves as a focus for teacher preparation institutions and pre-service candidates.

The Continuum is one component of a comprehensive program of support for the ongoing development of teaching practice. While it provides guidance in the gathering of formative data upon which to reflect, it is **not** intended as an evaluation or observation instrument. The Continuum presents a holistic view of teaching and was developed to do the following:

- Delineate the diversity of knowledge and skills needed to meet the changing needs of Alabama's students
- Support the reflective practice and ongoing learning of all teachers
- Support an ongoing process of formative assessment of beginning and experienced teachers' practice based on standards, criteria, and evidence
- Help educators set goals for professional development over time
- Describe the development of high-quality, effective teaching practices throughout a teacher's career

- Support a vision of quality teaching as one that fosters teacher leadership and ongoing collaboration and learning
- Encourage collaboration between classroom teachers and special educators so that all students have access to the general education curriculum and general learner standards

Using the Continuum to Make the AQTS Accessible to Beginning and Experienced Teachers

The Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development supports high levels of teacher performance and student learning in classrooms throughout the state. The Continuum makes the AQTS more accessible to teachers throughout their teaching careers, from pre-service through induction and beyond.

During the pre-service stage, the AQTS and the Continuum will support prospective teachers' understanding of and familiarity with the complex set of skills and abilities encompassed in Alabama's vision of quality teaching. The Continuum conveys the developmental nature of the learning process that educators must engage in to attain the highest levels of effectiveness and to facilitate high levels of achievement for every student.

Throughout teacher induction, mentors and beginning teachers will use the Continuum to collaboratively interpret teaching practice and to make informed decisions about the development of novice professionals.

Throughout their teaching careers, educators will use the Continuum to assess their current practice, envision next steps toward advancing their practice, and set specific and meaningful professional goals. The Continuum can guide educators in continually gathering data to demonstrate growth and to inform learning and development.

Ultimately, the Continuum is a powerful tool that can help teachers identify accomplishments and areas for growth, move toward autonomy, and become lifelong learners and teacher leaders.

Structure and Organization of the Continuum

The AQTS identifies key standards and **indicators**. In the Continuum, many of these **indicators** have been combined, and some are not included. Please note that the Continuum *enhances* but does not *supplant* the AQTS.

The Continuum is organized to describe five increasingly complex and sophisticated **levels of development** of practice: **Pre-Service and Beginning, Emerging, Applying, Integrating, and Innovating**. The indicators at each level describe what a teacher should know and be able to do at that level; these indicators are cumulative and include those stated in previous levels. While the "Pre-Service and Beginning" and "Emerging" columns describe the skills and abilities that novice teachers aim to develop during their induction period, it is not assumed that beginning teachers will necessarily enter the profession at this level of practice for every standard **indicator**.

The levels do not represent a *chronological* sequence in a teacher's growth; rather, each describes a *developmental* level of performance. A teacher may be at an Emerging or Applying level of practice for some indicators on the Continuum and at an Integrating or Innovating level for other indicators, regardless of how many years she or he has been in the profession. In fact, it is not uncommon for accomplished teachers to self-assess and find themselves moving from right to left on the continuum in response to new teaching contexts and challenges.

The Continuum is based on two assumptions: (1) that growth in professional practice comes from intentional reflection and engagement in appropriate professional learning opportunities and (2) that a teacher develops expertise and leadership as a member of a community of learners focused on high achievement for all students.

Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTs)

Standard 1: Content Knowledge

To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning

To increase the achievement of every student, teachers draw upon a thorough understanding of learning and development; recognize the role of families in supporting learning; design a student-centered learning environment; and use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.

Standard 3: Literacy

To improve student learning and achievement, teachers use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.

Standard 4: Diversity

To improve the learning of all students, teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs; exceptionalities; and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.

Standard 5: Professionalism

To increase the achievement of all students, teachers engage in continuous learning and self-improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based best practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and federal, state, and local laws and policies.

The Continuum's Five Levels of Teacher Development and Practice

The Alabama Continuum of Teacher Development includes five levels of teacher development and practice:

Pre-Service and Beginning

Individuals who are at the Pre-Service and Beginning level of practice work within the context of supported and guided internship or induction experiences. Pre-service teachers engage in ongoing learning in classrooms and clinical settings. Through multiple and varied opportunities for guided practice in preK-12 settings, they receive ongoing formative feedback that enables them to reflect on their individual teaching practices and how those practices affect student learning. Teacher candidates emerge from the pre-service experience with the requisite knowledge and skills to assume full-time positions in the profession.

With full responsibility for classrooms and as teachers of record, beginning teachers work to internalize and apply what they have learned about teaching. They develop a working knowledge of academic standards and assessments. They reflect on teaching practices and their impact on student learning. Beginning teachers rely on ongoing assistance from mentors and experienced colleagues for support and guidance.

Emerging

At the Emerging level of practice, teachers draw upon ongoing assistance and support from a mentor and other experienced colleagues to expand and enrich their knowledge and skills. These teachers utilize teaching theories and episodic classroom experiences to adjust and modify instruction. Emerging teachers become increasingly self-directed and independent in their professional practice, which is focused on their classrooms and each student therein.

Applying

At the Applying level of practice, career teachers operate at high levels of autonomy, internalizing and applying what they have learned about effective teaching. Utilizing their heightened awareness of students' academic and behavioral patterns, career teachers anticipate students' learning needs and responsively contextualize classroom experiences, both in the moment and in instructional planning. Career teachers systematically collect and use data to demonstrate the impact of their teaching on student achievement. They build upon varied professional learning opportunities to enhance personal practice while working collaboratively with colleagues to advance student learning.

Integrating

At the Integrating level of practice, accomplished teachers cultivate the classroom as a community of learners in which students are engaged and motivated. They skillfully adjust practice in response to various contexts. Their highly developed skills and self-efficacy enable them to integrate complex elements of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to maximize student engagement and learning. Their students consistently demonstrate increases in learning and achievement. Teachers at the Integrating level are also leaders among peers; they collaborate reflectively in learning communities to move classroom and schoolwide practices forward through aligned professional learning. Teachers at this level of practice guide apprentice and intern teachers, mentor beginning teachers, coach peers, assume leadership roles, and otherwise work to guide and develop colleagues.

Innovating

At the Innovating level of practice, teacher leaders are consistently creating in all areas of teaching and learning. They facilitate the complex integration of teaching and learning among teachers at all levels of practice and continue to innovate in their own teaching to support increases in student learning and achievement. Innovating teachers initiate and provide leadership for collaborative learning communities that are engaged in such activities as enhancing curriculum, developing innovative instructional delivery techniques, and fostering positive learning cultures in a variety of educational settings. Leaders in the school, district, and local community, teachers at the Innovating level often lead professional learning and classroom-based research activities, write for professional print-based and electronic journals, or otherwise contribute to the broader education community.

The Standards and Indicators of the Continuum

Following are the standards and indicators that appear in the *Continuum*:

Alabama Quality Teaching Standard 1: To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.

Indicators:

- 1.1 Demonstrates deep knowledge of subject-matter content and an ability to organize related facts, concepts, and skills
- 1.2 Activates learners' prior knowledge, experiences, and interests and uses this information to plan content and to help individual students attain learning goals
- 1.3 Connects curriculum to other content areas and real-life settings to promote retention and relevance
- 1.4 Designs instructional activities based on state content standards
- 1.5 Provides instructional accommodations, modifications, and adaptations to meet the needs of each individual learner

Alabama Quality Teaching Standard 2: To increase the achievement of every student, teachers draw upon a thorough understanding of learning and development; recognize the role of families in supporting learning; design a student-centered learning environment; and use research-based instructional and assessment strategies that motivate, engage, and maximize the learning of all students.

Indicators:

Organization and Management of Learning Environment

- 2.1 Designs a classroom organization and management system built upon sound, age-appropriate expectations and research-based strategies for promoting positive behavior
- 2.2 Creates a positive climate that promotes respect and responsibility
- 2.3 Creates a safe, orderly, and stimulating learning environment that nurtures responsibility, motivation, and engagement of learners

Using Instructional Strategies to Engage Learners

- 2.4 Develops challenging, standards-based academic goals for each learner, using knowledge of cognitive, social, and emotional development

- 2.5 Engages learners in developing and monitoring goals for their own learning and behavior
- 2.6 Designs coherent lessons that integrate a variety of appropriate and effective instructional strategies
- 2.7 Creates learning activities that optimize each individual's growth and achievement within a supportive environment

Assessment of Learning

- 2.8 Uses formative assessments to provide specific and timely feedback to assist learners in meeting learning targets and to adjust instruction
- 2.9 Uses summative assessments to measure learner attainment of specific learning targets
- 2.10 Maintains evidence and records of learning performance to communicate progress
- 2.11 Analyzes and uses disaggregated standardized assessment results to inform planning for individual learners and classes

Alabama Quality Teaching Standard 3: To improve student learning and achievement, teachers use knowledge of effective oral and written communications, reading, mathematics, and technology to facilitate and support direct instruction, active inquiry, collaboration, and positive interaction.

Indicators:

Oral and Written Communications

- 3.1 Demonstrates standard oral and written communications and integrates appropriate communication strategies
- 3.2 Fosters and responds to effective verbal and nonverbal communications during instruction

Development of Reading Skills and Accessing K-12 Literary Resources

- 3.3 Uses age-appropriate instructional strategies to improve learners' skills in critical literacy components
- 3.4 Integrates narrative and expository reading strategies across the curriculum

Development and Application of Mathematical Knowledge and Skills across Content Areas

- 3.5 Solves mathematical problems across subject areas using a variety of strategies to verify and interpret results and to draw conclusions
- 3.6 Communicates mathematical concepts, processes, and symbols within the content taught

Utilizing Technology

- 3.7 Identifies and integrates available emerging technologies into the teaching of all content areas
- 3.8 Facilitates learners' individual and collaborative use of technology and evaluates their technological proficiency

Alabama Quality Teaching Standard 4: To improve the learning of all students, teachers differentiate instruction in ways that exhibit a deep understanding of how cultural, ethnic, and social background; second language learning; special needs; exceptionalities; and learning styles affect student motivation, cognitive processing, and academic performance.

Indicators

Cultural, Ethnic, and Social Diversity

- 4.1 Develops culturally responsive curriculum and instruction in response to differences in individual experiences; cultural, ethnic, gender, and linguistic diversity; and socioeconomic status

- 4.2 Communicates in ways that demonstrate sensitivity to diversity and that acknowledge and respond to various cultural, ethnic, and social modes of communication and participation
- 4.3 Demonstrates and applies to own practice an understanding of how personal and cultural biases can affect teaching and learning

Language Diversity

- 4.4 Supports learners to accelerate language acquisition by utilizing their native language and linguistic background
- 4.5 Guides second-language acquisition and utilizes English Language Proficiency (ELP) strategies to support learning
- 4.6 Differentiates between learner difficulties related to cognitive or skill development and difficulties related to language learning

Special Needs

- 4.7 Understands and recognizes the characteristics of exceptionality in learning, including the range of physical and mental disabilities, social and emotional disorders, giftedness, dyslexia, and attention deficit disorder, in order to assist in appropriate identification and intervention
- 4.8 Facilitates inclusive learning environments that support and address the needs of learners with learning differences and disabilities

Learning Styles

- 4.9 Helps students assess their own learning styles and build upon identified strengths
- 4.10 Designs learning experiences that engage all learning styles and multiple intelligences

Alabama Quality Teaching Standard 5: To increase the achievement of all students, teachers engage in continual learning and self-improvement; collaborate with colleagues to create and adopt research-based best practices to achieve ongoing classroom and school improvement; and adhere to the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics and federal, state, and local laws and policies.

Indicators

- 5.1 Collaborates with stakeholders to facilitate student learning and well-being
- 5.2 Engages in ongoing professional learning to move practice forward
- 5.3 Participates as a teacher leader and professional learning community member to advance school improvement initiatives
- 5.4 Promotes professional ethics and integrity
- 5.5 Complies with local, state, and federal regulations and policies

Alabama Quality Teaching Standard 1, Content Knowledge: To improve the learning of all students, teachers master the disciplines related to their teaching fields including the central concepts, important facts and skills, and tools of inquiry; they anchor content in learning experiences that make the subject matter meaningful for all students.

1.1 Demonstrates deep knowledge of subject-matter content and an ability to organize related facts, concepts, and skills

Pre-Service and Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge of the core concepts, facts, procedures, and skills comprising specific curricular areas related to teaching assignment.	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses knowledge of subject matter to plan rigorous and relevant units and lessons appropriate to the age and developmental level of all learners.	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates and uses a wide range of text-based and additional resources to differentiate content to motivate and academically challenge all learners.	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses expanded knowledge, including primary sources when appropriate, to support student understanding of key concepts, themes, multiple perspectives, and interrelationships. <input type="checkbox"/> Works with colleagues to plan units and lessons that immerse learners actively in the discipline and to think analytically and creatively about the content. <input type="checkbox"/> Reads academic journals and other sources to identify research findings and best practices related to a specific discipline and shares these with colleagues. <input type="checkbox"/>	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Uses comprehensive knowledge of subject matter and student development to ensure that all students understand related facts and concepts within and across content areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with colleagues to incorporate research findings into unit and lesson designs. <input type="checkbox"/> Writes for academic journals and other outlets, including the Web, to report successful innovations implemented by members of the school community.

1.2 Activates learners' prior knowledge, experience, and interests and uses this information to plan content and to help individual students attain learning goals

Pre-Service and Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Assesses and uses students' prior knowledge and understandings to inform the planning and delivery of instruction. □ Connects new content to learners' interests and life experiences 	<p>...and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Designs a variety of assessments, including pretests and informal measures, to determine pre-instructional levels of students' knowledge and skills—and uses results to differentiate instruction. 	<p>...and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Plans and delivers relevant learning activities that build upon student knowledge, as accessed through purposeful questioning. □ Identifies learner misconceptions about content and modifies activities to scaffold new understandings. 	<p>...and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Works with team members to design, implement, and assess project-based learning experiences for students that relate to student interests and deepen students' knowledge and understanding of content. □ Engages colleagues and students in formulating questions and designing learning activities that draw upon and respond to learners' varied experiences, knowledge, and interests. 	<p>...and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Leads colleagues in reflection and assessment focused on the extent to which they are deepening students' understanding of content knowledge and strategically linking student experiences, knowledge, and interests to content throughout instruction. □ Supports colleagues in the analysis of factors influencing learner performance and in acting on results.

1.3 Connects the curriculum to other content areas and real-life settings to promote retention and relevance

Pre-Service and Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge of the importance of making the curriculum relevant to learners. <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks and utilizes opportunities to identify real-life connections across the curriculum.	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Poses carefully conceived questions that help learners connect content to previous learning and to other subject areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Assists students, as needed, in identifying relevant connections. <input type="checkbox"/> Engages students in exploring real-world issues and solving authentic problems using digital tools and resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Designs, develops, and assesses lessons and units that are learner centered and reflective of best practices in teaching and learning with technology (e.g., project-based learning).	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Designs and presents units of study and lessons that demonstrate connections to key concepts and skills across disciplines. <input type="checkbox"/> Teaches rigorous and relevant lessons that connect learners to content and ensure deep understanding.	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Works with colleagues to integrate academic disciplines and connect life themes, skills, and situations throughout instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses a variety of responsive instructional methods to support learners in building relevant connections within and across academic disciplines.	...and <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with colleagues to plan, assess, and revise a systematically integrated curriculum that engages all learners in relevant academic challenge across academic disciplines and results in learner success.

1.4 Designs instructional activities based on state content standards

Pre-Service and Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
<input type="checkbox"/> Plans instructional activities that align with Alabama's Courses of Study.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Designs learning activities that integrate multiple content standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates clearly the connections between the standards and the knowledge and skills being taught. <input type="checkbox"/> Designs, develops, and evaluates digital-age learning experiences and assessments.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses multiple resources, including textbooks, to develop coherent short- and long- range plans that are aligned with content standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Formulates essential questions to organize and focus content for students. <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiates plans to support all learners in accessing state content standards.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with colleagues in using a wide range of materials and methods to plan and implement instructional activities that promote learners' deep understanding of content and enable them to demonstrate the knowledge and skills embedded in state standards.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitates teams of teachers in the creation of varied and differentiated opportunities for learners to develop, monitor, and extend learning related to state standards. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides leadership that engages colleagues in ongoing analysis and mapping of curriculum to ensure alignment of state standards with the curriculum being taught.

1.5 Provides instructional accommodations, modifications, and adaptations to meet the needs of each individual learner

Pre-Service and Beginning	Emerging	Applying	Integrating	Innovating
<input type="checkbox"/> Addresses identified learner needs in designing instructional plans using available resources and materials.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Selects and incorporates alternative curricular materials to accommodate various levels of learner readiness.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Modifies instructional strategies, materials, and resources to provide appropriate support and challenge for each learner based on ongoing formative assessments. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzes student assessments with colleagues to identify learner needs and modifies instruction accordingly.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with colleagues in the identification and use of an extensive repertoire of instructional adaptations to enhance and advance learning opportunities for each learner. Works with colleagues to monitor and assess the effectiveness of these adaptations on student learning; makes modifications as indicated. <input type="checkbox"/> Adapts content delivery based on student learning styles and interests to ensure achievement of learning goals for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborates with colleagues to assess student work and identify a wide variety of modifications in instructional resources and delivery methods.	<p>...and</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Provides leadership to engage colleagues in the design, implementation, analysis, and refinement of lesson accommodations and modifications that ensure success for all learners.