



TEACHING IMPORTANT CONTENT: THE CASE FOR IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING
COMPONENT STUDY SERIES





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WHY THE FFT COMPONENT STUDY SERIES

The Framework for Teaching (FFT) was created to guide professional learning experiences for educators. Building upon the release of the updated 2022 FFT, the Danielson Group (DG) is excited to disseminate a series of professional learning guides that highlight subsets of FFT components, giving educators tools to address instructional problems of practice as individuals, collaborative groups and whole school communities. These guides give educators the opportunity to consider ways to improve the educational experience for every student by focusing on a subset of FFT instructional components that directly impact student intellectual engagement, culturally responsive practices, teaching important content, equitable family partnerships, and assessment and feedback practices.

In the DG's pursuit of excellent teaching for each and every student, we are consistently guided by our foundational beliefs about learning and our values as educators. These beliefs are reflected in the Framework for Teaching (FFT) developed by Charlotte Danielson. Our nation and our field continue to grapple with the effects of years of institutional inequities caused by systemic racism. Students, educators, families, and communities of color have long borne the resulting trauma. Every day, more and more educators are acknowledging the historical impact of racial inequity and are working together with communities to repair, transform, and heal. We believe lasting equity and healing will only happen when we explicitly honor and dignify students and educators by leading and teaching with an equity imperative.

The Danielson Group (DG) is committed to contributing to that healing and transformation by truly honoring educators as learners and promoting reflective practice, collaborative inquiry, and instructional coaching as necessary to effective professional learning.

The Framework for Teaching Component Study Series is intended to support districts and organizations in prioritizing equity while maintaining an unwavering focus on instructional excellence.

An equity imperative has always been implicit in the FFT. As Charlotte Danielson wrote, “A commitment to excellence is not complete without a commitment to equity” (2007). We envision classrooms where **EACH AND EVERY** student has:

- intentionally and carefully crafted opportunities and resources to succeed emotionally, socially, and academically.
- additional levels of social and emotional support, as well as tiered scaffolds that allow all students to access grade-level academic content.
- the belief and support from every adult in their lives in their intellect, strengths and capabilities.

In this guide, and in all of our work moving forward, we will make this equity imperative explicit and be unapologetic in our commitment to racial justice, diversity, and inclusivity. As an organization, we acknowledge that some of our approaches have allowed inequitable systems and unsupportive learning environments to go unchecked for too long. Promoting excellence means that we honor and dignify students and teachers by focusing simultaneously on implementing best instructional practices and ongoing teacher learning and development. It also means that we prioritize understanding how classroom practices and curricular materials and resources do, or do not, center equity and justice. The journey to excellence and equity cannot be blind to issues of racism and other systems of oppression. **Excellence for some is not excellence.**

The **Framework for Teaching Component Study Series** and its approaches are informed by DG conversations with educators, our experience as an organization, and what we've learned from our partners. In this FFT Component Study Guide we provide our current thinking, recommendations for reflection and practice, and suggestions for professional learning on the equity imperative of **teaching important content to all students using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)**.

The **FFT Component Study Series** provides recommendations and strategies for how best to leverage the FFT in service of equity. The recommendations and suggestions included here are not exhaustive lists; local factors and context should always guide how educators decide to apply them. Our hope is that these guides will help educators apply the common language of the FFT to their current context and see the connection between the components of effective instruction and the many ways we can help students reach their learning goals.

AN UPDATED APPROACH

Revised Components and Elements

- ✓ The 2022 edition of the entire Framework for Teaching was developed during 2020-2021 and is now available to the field. Some of the most exciting and relevant updates are included in this guide. We think these updates are especially important to equity and culturally relevant teaching, as well as to the primary mission of schools: enhancing student learning, well-being and growth.

The Essential Component - 1b:

✓ Knowing and Valuing Students

Perhaps one of the most impactful and important changes included in the 2022 FFT is the renaming of Component 1b from “Knowledge of Students” to “Knowing and

Valuing Students.” With a shift to explicitly promoting equity in education, the first and most important component in all areas of instruction is that of Knowing and Valuing Students. Indeed, without understanding and connecting with the learners in our classrooms, we have little hope of effectively instructing them at all. The use of action words (knowing and valuing) in the updated language, coupled with the addition of the equity mindset embedded in valuing all students, creates an asset-based, action-oriented approach to **learning about and knowing** the students we serve in order to honor and dignify their presence in our classrooms.

Getting to know our students—including their cultural context, beliefs, understandings, prior knowledge base, and thought processes—is what informs the practical implementation of standards-based curricula.

No Rubric

- ✓ Educators need support, not scores, in order to grow and improve their practice. Now is not the time to be thinking about how to evaluate teacher performance. This moment compels us to pause and engage in a thoughtful reset on how our approaches to professional learning can honor and dignify teachers and the work they do while supporting the growth and development of their instructional practice in service of student learning and success. For this reason, the Component Study Guides do not contain rubrics with four levels of performance. Instead, we describe **priorities, actions, and strategies** that align to proficient and distinguished practice and focus on supporting students' learning, wellbeing, sense of belonging, and success.

GUIDE FEATURES

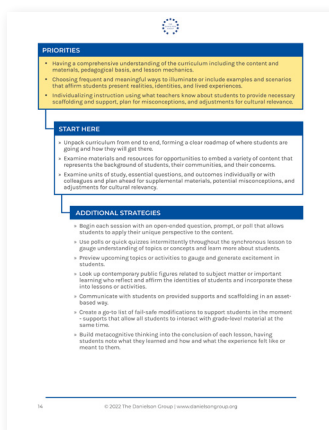
All of the Component Study Guides align to the FFT, are rooted in its enduring principles, and reflect some important shifts in response to our current context and information gathered from scholars and practitioners in the field:

A Focus on Fewer Components

All 22 components of the FFT remain incredibly important and will always need to be interwoven while teaching. And yet, our research, observations, and conversations with experts and practitioners have led us to consider the value of highlighting **a narrower set of components** in order to better support educators when they have made an intentional decision to focus on a particular equity imperative, such as teaching important content. The components highlighted in this guide are unified through a vision of each student learning important content by engaging with rich, grade-level materials and resources.

Component Study

Each of the focus components is presented separately. The first page is a narrative that explains the component. In addition to the narrative, there is a box that describes how the component can be leveraged to implement high-quality instructional materials in service of our equity imperative.

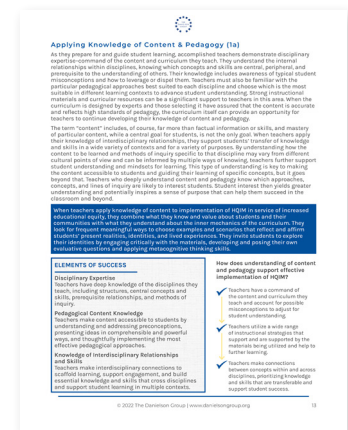


Each component section also includes elements of success that help to define that component, as well as:

Priorities - Recommendations for where teachers should focus their time and energy. These are the most important things to focus on as they plan their growth and development in this component.

Start Here - A set of actions teachers can take immediately in order to set themselves and their students up for success.

Additional Strategies for Teaching Important Content with HQIM - Approaches and suggestions for how to implement HQIM in support of increased educational equity.



A Recommended Pathway

The focus components in this guide are not presented in the order they have always appeared in the FFT. Each guide in the Component Study Series includes a recommended pathway that helps educators focus on the highest leverage components of the FFT that will help educators implement HQIM effectively. With a deeper understanding of students’ identities and lived experiences, we are better prepared and more likely to meet their needs. Therefore, the first step in the pathway is necessarily Component 1b: Knowing and Valuing Students. This essential component must be addressed with fidelity and proficiency before moving on to the components in the three stages of practice.

WHY EMPHASIZE USING HQIM?

This guide highlights the equity imperative that **all students have opportunities to learn important content at every grade level**. It explains how classroom practices, curricular materials, and resources do or do not center equity and inclusion.

In order to achieve this vision, students need access to high-quality instruction every day; and teachers must have access to high-quality instructional materials as well as the professional learning needed to use those materials well.

It is every student's right to learn about and deeply understand the guiding principles that undergird the content disciplines. Access to standards-based, rich and rigorous learning experiences provides students the opportunity to acquire important knowledge. And yet, the average student spends 581 of 720 available hours in a single school year on poor quality assignments that are deemed to be below their grade level.¹ This is particularly significant for students of color and students living in poverty. A 2015 study found students in low-income areas are less likely than students in high-income areas to have quality content and curriculum in the classroom, and students of color and those from low-income backgrounds were less likely than white and higher-income students to be in classrooms with grade-appropriate assignments.²

As noted in the FFT, teachers are responsible for using resources effectively (component 1d) to teach knowledge-building grade level content and to model the dispositions needed for successful learning. This responsibility requires educators to learn about and deeply understand the school's or district's adopted

curricula, assessments, and associated materials and resources. Most often, teachers will then need to seek out supplemental resources to address the needs of particular populations of learners. The process of creating scaffolds for learning to the current curricula is a time consuming endeavor that requires specific skills and knowledge. As a result, more and more school organizations are adopting and implementing curricular resources and materials that are aligned with national and state standards, the science of learning, and culturally responsive practices. Instructional resources and materials are referred to as "high-quality" when they are aligned with national and local standards for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each school year. Such materials include a full year of materials including syllabi, scope and sequence, lesson plans, books, and assessments that support student mastery of grade-level materials.

When teachers fully utilize High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), they are better able to apply and focus their creative/instructional/practical efforts on facilitating rich learning experiences that engage learners emotionally, socially and intellectually. The suggested supports and scaffolds found in HQIM create learning experiences where all students are able to learn important, grade-level content using the same curricular resources at the same time, in meaningful and collaborative ways.

The implementation of HQIM is a relatively new approach for teachers to embed in their practice. In the past, teachers were responsible for and often prided themselves on building their own curricula and generating their own materials to best support their learners. This model resulted in uneven educational experiences for many students as both expert-level teachers and access to quality supplemental materials were necessary. Today, schools and districts are adopting

1 TNT. (2018). The Opportunity Myth. Retrieved from: <https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/>

2 Schmidt, W., Burroughs, N., Zoido, P., Houang, R. (2015). The Role of Schooling in Perpetuating Educational Inequality: An International Perspective. Educational Researcher, Vol 44 (7), page 371-386.



curricula that are aligned and designed to a high pedagogical standard. While some teachers may at first see this as a threat to their creative control, even the most resistant can come to appreciate the ability to shift the focus from meeting and matching changing standards to finding the best way to engage their learners meaningfully with the provided high-quality materials.

Indeed, the quality of instructional materials is foundational to the ability to teach important content. High-quality resources provide a standards-based roadmap for teachers of where students need to be and

the tools and plans to get each student there. HQIM provide teachers with guidance and resources for collaborative planning, sharing student data, best practices, and suggestions for how to adjust lessons so that all students are mastering grade-level content. Often, successful implementation of HQIM helps teachers realize exactly what their learners are capable of when both learner and instructor are properly supported with all the resources they need to teach and learn important content. Implementation of standards-aligned resources and materials provides a strong foundation and an accountable, sustainable approach to achieving this equity imperative.

Features of High-Quality Instructional Materials

- Include a full year's worth of teacher materials (e.g., syllabi, lesson plans) and student materials (e.g., books, assignments, tests) that support student mastery of grade-level material.
- Help educators teach to grade-level expectations and are fully aligned to local and national standards for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each school year.
- Are third-party rated or vetted (e.g. achieved a "green" rating on EdReports - a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that reviews and rates instructional materials) indicating that the materials reflect evidence-based research on effective instruction.
- Allow all students to use grade-level materials regardless of their starting point.
- Improve student outcomes.
- Are user-friendly and include implementation supports and scaffolds for teachers to differentiate instruction, recognize common challenges students might have with content, and how to respond to them.
- Allow teachers to leverage planning time to focus on meeting individual student needs.
- Provide teachers with a road map of where students need to be by the end of the school year and the tools and lesson plans to help them get there.
- Promote reflective practice, collaborative planning, and learning time for teachers (reviewing student data, sharing best practices, and adjusting lessons to ensure students are mastering grade-level content and standards).
- Raise teacher expectations of what students are able to know and do.
- Increase job satisfaction and retention.

Creating a full year curriculum that supports instruction in a given content area requires specialization that teachers should not be expected to come into the classroom with, and even if teachers do have that expertise, they do not have adequate time to apply it. In space of that, we define high-quality instructional materials as curricular resources that are aligned with national and local standards for what students should know and be able to do by the end of the year. There are organizations that have committed to creating curricula that meets those standards and other organizations that evaluate the success of their efforts.

USING THIS GUIDE

After learning about and committing to integrating Component 1b into your practice - we won't say "mastering" this component because it is something that masterful teachers work on continuously throughout their careers - we move through the stages from Ensuring Necessary Conditions, to Arranging for Learning, and finally Teaching for Student Success.

The stages are in place to help you start where you will have the most impact. Review the content in Stage 1. If you feel that your practice is already proficient in these methods and you've adopted these priorities, then move on to Stage 2.



THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

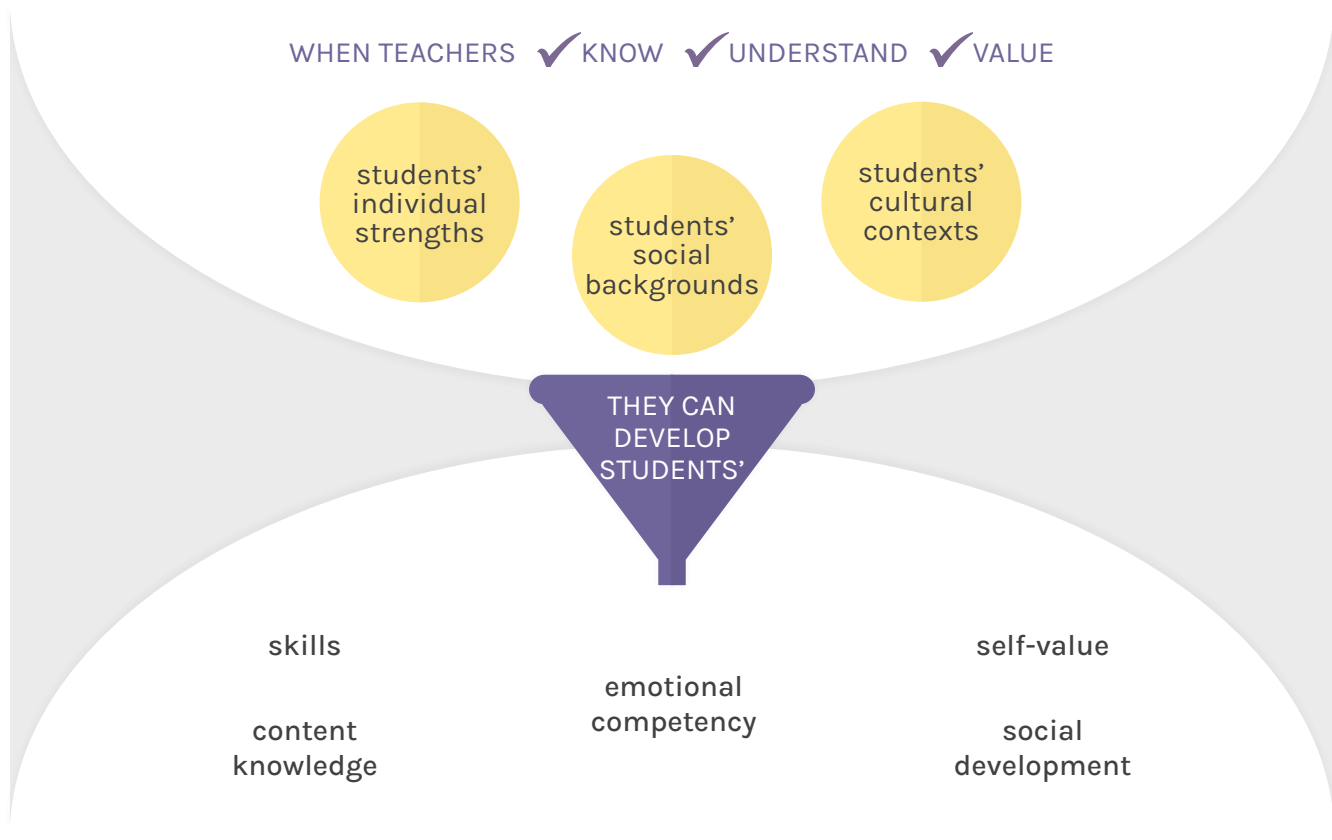
KNOWING AND VALUING STUDENTS (1b)

Creating access for each student to high-quality instruction and instructional materials requires that teachers know and value their students first. To maximize learning, teachers must be able to make the curriculum accessible to each and every learner. Successful teachers are consistently guided by who their students are and who they hope to become, which means they understand, honor, and leverage students' intersecting identities—including their racial, cultural, religious, and gender identities, among others. They support student success by affirming the dignity of students and their lived experiences. Teachers must also develop understanding of students' current knowledge and skills in order to plan successful learning experiences.

However, teachers' knowledge of students must extend beyond understanding their familiarity with content or their academic skills to include their social, emotional, and personality strengths. While there are patterns in human development for different age groups, students learn in individual ways and bring varied experiences and identities to learning. Teachers must also rely on their knowledge of students when they apply their understanding of the learning process and learning differences when planning and preparing for instruction.

The act of teaching is defined by the act of learning.

Teachers need to spend significant time and effort throughout the year learning about their students, their lives outside of school, their wellbeing, and other assets and needs in relation to learning and development. Successful teachers value the fact that students come to school with a wealth of knowledge, experience, and skills. Students' experiences outside of formal education (with family and friends, through faith communities, in their jobs and activities) build knowledge, encourage curiosity, and communicate shared norms and values, including mindsets about learning. It is essential that teachers value and partner with students' families and communities. Doing so allows them to leverage the assets students bring from their out-of-school lives to the in-school learning experience in pursuit of academic and personal development that ultimately contribute to individual and societal flourishing.



How does knowing and valuing our students support teaching important content with HQIM?

Knowing and valuing students is essential to successfully teaching important content. The act of teaching is defined by the act of learning. Effective, successful educators know that simply delivering information, without modification and adjustments based on consideration for the students receiving it, is not teaching and will be insufficient. In order to develop children's skills, content knowledge, emotional competency, social development, and self value, teachers must deeply know, understand, and value the individual strengths, social backgrounds, and cultural contexts of the students they teach and the communities in which they live. Armed with this information, educators are then able to impart information in a way that is most effective for their particular students, as a group and as individuals. Teachers will continue to make adjustments from year to year as well as from moment to moment to ensure that important content is not only being taught, but absorbed and applied in new situations effectively.

Teachers who *know and value* their students recognize how systemic inequality has and continues to influence whether all learners are taught important content, a crucial equalizing step that is often undervalued and overlooked. It is the teacher's task to unearth and unlearn their biases, explicit and unconscious, by actively developing a deep and meaningful appreciation for and understanding of their entire student population.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Respect for Students' Identities

Students' lived experiences and funds of knowledge are the foundation for the development of identity, purpose, intellect, and character.

Understanding of Students' Current Knowledge and Skills

Learning experiences reflect what students bring and are designed with their current knowledge and skills in mind.

Knowledge of Whole Child Development

Students' cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development are all addressed in the design of learning environments and experiences to promote student success and autonomy.

Knowledge of the Learning Process and Learning Differences

Learning requires active intellectual engagement and appropriate support aligned to students' individual differences and needs.

How are each student's individual context, identity, assets, and brilliance valued and viewed as the foundation for their academic and personal success?



Teachers know and value their students' identities, as well as their academic, social, and emotional strengths and needs.



Teachers build on students' assets to support the development of identity, intellect, and character.



Teachers apply their knowledge of students to advocate boldly on their behalf and foster student assumption of responsibility for learning and personal development.



PRIORITIES

- Learning about each student's motivations, interests, daily schedule, cultural context, and current level of well-being.
- Understanding and being able to articulate what you value about your individual students as well as the community to which they belong.
- Communicating to students that you value them and have a genuine interest in building connections with them.
- Considering how students' unique identities and assets will help to inform the customization of HQIM to ensure their successful implementation.
- Educating yourself about the historical context of the community that you are working with and practicing using an asset-based perspective when communicating with families and community members.

START HERE

- » Develop methods to gather and track information about students' mindsets, interests, assets, and needs.
- » Examine your first few units of instructional materials for opportunities to demonstrate inclusion and practice building community.
- » Get to know the community in which you are working. Visit local institutions, read about the history, and create and maintain relationships with local community members.
- » Consider creative ways to gather feedback from students on what makes them feel successful personally and academically.
- » Locate and monitor resources to stay informed on current events that impact the local community and be ready to attend to student responses or concerns.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Conduct one-on-one student interviews. When individual interviews are not feasible, use surveys or journal prompts.
- » Adopt curriculum and lesson plans that allow students to talk about their individual identities, background and culture, and skills.
- » Adapt materials so that they provide significant structured time for students to share with each other around identity.
- » Create daily moments where students have their current identity and lived experience affirmed and acknowledged through activities and discussions.
- » Provide several opportunities in each session for students to answer open-ended questions, prompts, or polls that allow them to relate their lived experience.
- » Consider a journaling routine for students that supports daily reflection that is either kept private or submitted.
- » Develop methods to communicate with students individually and use them to affirm students and strengthen relationships .
- » Attend events within the community or host some at your school with the sole purpose of community building.
- » Build and maintain relationships with support personnel who work with your students. Schedule regular formal and informal check-ins.

STAGE 01

ENSURING NECESSARY CONDITIONS

Understanding Content and Unpacking Materials



APPLYING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT & PEDAGOGY (1a)

How does applying knowledge of content and pedagogy support teaching important content with HQIM?

Component 1a highlights the fact that thorough, and even passionate content and pedagogical knowledge is not enough to enable one to teach effectively. Content knowledge - deeply understanding the topic at hand - must be (1) applied effectively and (2) combined with sound pedagogical practices to facilitate transfer and assimilation of new concepts and skills. Strong instructional materials and carefully selected curricular resources are essential to enable this facilitation of learning. Standards-aligned resources create a bridge between what the teacher knows and wishes to impart, and how the student acquires that information. High-quality instructional materials and resources are fully aligned to local and national standards, support all students in completing grade-level appropriate work, and reflect evidence-based research on effective instruction—all key factors in effectively applying knowledge of content and pedagogy in support of success and achievement for each and every student.

All students deserve and are entitled to have opportunities to learn important, grade-level content through access to high-quality instructional materials and resources. The DG believes this is an equity imperative. However, HQIM themselves are not a cure-all to increase the achievement of historically underserved student populations. The instructional materials need to be paired with effective instruction from skilled teachers with deep content knowledge and sound pedagogical practices. Often, the “achievement” gap that describes a deficit in student achievement and success is actually an “instructional” gap. Effective teachers strive to close student opportunity gaps and accelerate learning. Teachers who master their discipline’s content, pedagogy, and implementation of standards-aligned instructional materials and resources fully unlock the enduring understandings of the important content they teach to all of their students.

Read more about Component 1a [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to applying content of knowledge and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Disciplinary Expertise

Teachers have deep knowledge of the disciplines they teach, including structures, central concepts and skills, prerequisite relationships, and methods of inquiry.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Teachers make content accessible to students by understanding and addressing preconceptions, presenting ideas in comprehensible and powerful ways, and thoughtfully implementing the most effective pedagogical approaches.

Knowledge of Interdisciplinary Relationships and Skills

Teachers make interdisciplinary connections to scaffold learning, support engagement, and build essential knowledge and skills that cross disciplines and support student learning in multiple contexts.

How does understanding of content and pedagogy support effective implementation of HQIM?

- ✓ Teachers have a command of the content and curriculum they teach and account for possible misconceptions to adjust for student understanding.
- ✓ Teachers utilize a wide range of instructional strategies that support and are supported by the materials being utilized and help to further learning.
- ✓ Teachers make connections between concepts within and across disciplines, prioritizing knowledge and skills that are transferable and support student success.



PRIORITIES

- Having a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum including the content and materials, pedagogical basis, and lesson mechanics.
- Choosing frequent and meaningful ways to illuminate or include examples and scenarios that affirm students' present realities, identities, and lived experiences.
- Individualizing instruction using what teachers know about students to provide necessary scaffolding and support, plan for misconceptions, and adjustments for cultural relevance.

START HERE

- » Unpack curriculum from end to end, forming a clear roadmap of where students are going and how they will get there.
- » Examine materials and resources for opportunities to embed a variety of content that represents the background of students, their communities, and their concerns.
- » Examine units of study, essential questions, and outcomes individually or with colleagues and plan ahead for supplemental materials, potential misconceptions, and adjustments for cultural relevancy.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Begin each session with an open-ended question, prompt, or poll that allows students to apply their unique perspective to the content.
- » Use polls or quick quizzes intermittently throughout the synchronous lesson to gauge understanding of topics or concepts and learn more about students.
- » Preview upcoming topics or activities to gauge and generate excitement in students.
- » Look up contemporary public figures related to subject matter or important learning who reflect and affirm the identities of students and incorporate these into lessons or activities.
- » Communicate with students on provided supports and scaffolding in an asset-based way.
- » Create a go-to list of fail-safe modifications to support students in the moment - supports that allow all students to interact with grade-level material at the same time.
- » Build metacognitive thinking into the conclusion of each lesson, having students note what they learned and how and what the experience felt like or meant to them.



CULTIVATING RESPECTFUL AND AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS (2a)

How does cultivating respectful and affirming environments support teaching important content with HQIM?

A student's basic needs for safety and belonging must be met in order to unlock their full potential and joyfully and enthusiastically engage in learning. Creating a learning environment that is respectful and affirming ensures that these needs are met and provides the opportunity for learning to occur for everyone. The learning environment includes much more than a classroom or a virtual space where the learning is taking place. Rather, the learning environment is defined by the tone, the mood, the relationships, and the beliefs that fill that space. A teacher who attends to these factors effectively creates the emotional and social conditions necessary for students to access their higher order cognitive skills, which is essential when learning important content. High-quality instructional resources are an important support when creating these conditions in the way they were designed and developed to respect and reflect the varied skills, abilities, and funds of knowledge of individual learners, as well as to affirm their identities, experiences, and cultural backgrounds.

In order to ensure equitable educational experiences and opportunities for each student, we must meet students' needs for safety and belonging. Teachers need to seek out ways to communicate to students that they are valued and respected within the learning environment—the routines, procedures, and learning materials all contribute to this communication. In equitable classrooms, the definition of what is considered “respectful” is not dictated and handed down by the teacher, but rather designed, developed, and co-created by teachers and students alike. Exceptional educators understand and recognize the systemic forces of exclusion that marginalize certain communities and identities in our society. They use their understanding to design activities that purposefully build inclusive classroom communities. Students thrive in these classrooms because they know that they are unconditionally valued.

Read more about Component 2a [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to cultivating respectful and affirming environments, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Positive Relationships

Teacher-student and student-student interactions demonstrate caring and respect and honor the dignity of each member of the community.

Sense of Belonging

Teachers and students co-create a community that reflects their unique collective identity and interests as a class while honoring individual identities.

Cultural Responsiveness

Ways of interacting in the classroom are culturally responsive and supported by teachers' own cultural competence and understanding of societal dynamics and their impact on learning environments.

Positive Conflict Resolution

A clear and culturally competent approach to conflict resolution has been established and is used effectively to resolve conflict and restore trust.

How are students playing an active role in creating learning environments characterized by a sense of community, where each member feels safe, valued, and connected?

- ✓ Learning materials are used in a way that fosters dialogue, joyful inquiry, reflection, and growth.
- ✓ Learning spaces are co-designed by teachers and students to address community needs and support the use of HQIM.
- ✓ Student-directed routines and procedures maximize opportunities for learning and foster independence.



PRIORITIES

- Working together with students to establish classroom norms that are inclusive of student identities, assets, and lived experience.
- Establishing and cultivating a culture of accountability and respect where understanding, connection, and relationship building is prioritized.
- Developing a deep and studied understanding of the history and present nature of oppression in education as a basis for developing an anti-racist and affirming classroom environment.
- Using understanding of systemic oppression to purposefully disrupt the status quo in the classroom, amplifying voices that are commonly excluded and affirming identities that are commonly marginalized.
- Auditing materials for deficit-based language and/or negative messages about marginalized groups, and adjusting instruction/materials or addressing these issues as they arise.

START HERE

- » Co-create norms for learning and classroom interactions with students and revisit these expectations often with students, revising when called for.
- » Develop and teach methods around conflict resolution and restorative practices. Model their use as an instructor and encourage students' agency in using them, even when they feel the teacher is in the wrong.
- » Join or create a study group with colleagues to better understand oppression in education and how your classroom practices either undo or uphold these systems.
- » Plan activities or modify resources to amplify voices that are commonly excluded and affirm identities that are commonly marginalized.
- » Interact with student-facing materials and work with colleagues across identities to examine units of study for potentially harmful messages, methods, or content.
- » Consider methods to seek feedback from students on whether they feel affirmed in your classroom.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Ask students to share what respect looks like or means to them. This can be a class discussion or a written assignment.
- » Create opportunities in each lesson for community building and getting to know each other.
- » Study best practices for creating inclusive classroom environments and implement these practices at the start of the year.
- » Learn about students' relationships and interactions with each other outside your classroom and use this knowledge to help maintain a positive learning environment.
- » Affirm and celebrate students for academic and personal growth. Create a place in the classroom where students can celebrate themselves and each other.
- » When developing classroom norms, choose restorative practices over punitive ones.
- » Include questions in activities or assessments that allow you to probe into whether students feel affirmed and included in your classroom.
- » Address deficit based language or negative messages about marginalized groups when they appear. Include students in the discussion.



FOSTERING A CULTURE FOR LEARNING (2b)

How does fostering a culture for learning support teaching important content with HQIM?

Component 2b requires teachers to elevate, model, provide opportunities to practice, and reinforce the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of scholastic achievement. Teachers openly demonstrate their own curiosity, recount their experiences and academic struggles, and show persistence and resilience in their unrelenting pursuit of their students' success. Educators seek out culturally relevant examples of people who exemplify the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors they hope to impart to their students, and they seamlessly integrate these examples into their instruction and instructional materials. In utilizing HQIM, teachers not only focus on what needs to be done, but how it will be accomplished, and why these methods are being employed. This additional insight allows students to engage more thoroughly and develop a sense of ownership over the learning process. This high level of student agency is essential to fostering a culture for learning in the classroom and among students.

Appreciating the high value of academic achievement and possessing the prerequisite skills to achieve scholastic success are often privileges that are unavailable to our most marginalized students. When teachers foster a culture for equitable learning, they use what they know about their students to help them personally identify with a strong desire to succeed academically. Teachers model the skills, curiosity, resilience, and creativity necessary to foster a positive, asset-based culture for learning and recognize and celebrate these skills in their students. Skillful teachers encourage students to share knowledge with each other, apply knowledge from unconventional sources, and share their opinions, perspectives, and lived experiences in order to personally connect the students with the material being taught.

Read more about Component 2b [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to fostering a culture for learning, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Purpose and Motivation

Teachers and students share an overarching dedication to both content mastery and personal growth.

Dispositions for Learning

Teachers model, encourage, explicitly teach, and reinforce curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection to support student success and their social, emotional, and academic growth.

Student Agency and Pride in Work

Students make informed choices, devote energy to learning, take pride in their accomplishments, and actively suggest ways to make the classroom more joyful, rigorous, and purposeful.

Support and Perseverance

Teachers and students encourage one another to persevere and use strategies to support each other through challenging work.

In what ways do teachers model and encourage the types of actions and attitudes that contribute to a joyful, rigorous, and purposeful classroom that supports personal and academic growth?

- ✓ The culture of the class is conducive to student learning and development.
- ✓ The culture of the class is characterized by high expectations as well as the supports needed for the successful learning and development of all students.
- ✓ Students play an active role in establishing a culture that consistently fosters dialogue, joyful inquiry, reflection, and growth, allowing all students to flourish.



PRIORITIES

- Modeling and frequently illuminating the real-world benefits and positive personal impacts of acquiring new academic knowledge.
- Demonstrating the value of the knowledge that students already possess, even if it comes from unconventional sources.
- Encouraging students to share knowledge with each other and with the teacher to increase the relevance of learning.
- Creating opportunities for students to have their knowledge, opinions, perspectives, and lived experiences validated by peers and instructors.

START HERE

- » Plan opportunities to share with students how your own passion for acquiring new knowledge was developed and how it has positively impacted you personally.
- » Seek and implement methods to actively and effectively teach the value of acquiring new academic knowledge.
- » Create frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate and share prior knowledge and encourage students to affirm each other for doing so.
- » Express a desire and willingness to learn from students. Plan opportunities to demonstrate that learning is “a two-way street” in your classroom.
- » Modify or adjust materials or activities to create opportunities for students to share about their lives and identities and affirm each other in their sharing.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Encourage students to give positive praise to their classmates for taking risks, demonstrating curiosity, or other actions that show a strong desire to acquire new academic knowledge.
- » Encourage student autonomy by arranging resources and materials in a predictable and consistent manner.
- » Display a wide range of student work, celebrating what is good about each piece.
- » Make scaffolding, accommodating, or supplemental materials available to all students.
- » Ask students probing questions about any prior knowledge they can relate to the instructional material.
- » Save the work of previous students and share with the current class. When a student demonstrates persistence, ask if you can keep their work to share with future students.
- » Frequently ask students about their learning goals, both formally and informally.



GROWING AND DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALLY (4e)

How does growing and developing professionally support teaching important content with HQIM?

Component 4e asks teachers to be committed to continuous learning and growing as professionals by consistently interrogating their current beliefs and practices in an effort to grow as educators, role models, school leaders, and influential members of the local community. This professional growth and development occurs by engaging in reflective practice, collaborative inquiry and seeking and implementing meaningful feedback in order to enhance instructional skills and understanding. Intentional professional growth is essential in all aspects of educational practice, including teaching important content through the effective implementation of HQIM. One of the powerful strengths of these materials is the embedded professional learning provided to teachers. The attention to the science of learning is evident in the scaffolds provided for teachers to use to both support their own learning and to meet the needs of students in their classrooms. Teachers committed to implementing standards-aligned resources and materials will develop an ever-expanding toolkit of best practices to further their own professional learning and growth in support of their students' success.

When a teacher grows and develops professionally with a focus on the success and achievement of their students, they promote educational equity in the classroom. These educators seek out opportunities to also learn about equity and injustice in our society and in education, and seek to dismantle the status quo. These teachers engage in professional learning that helps them to more deeply understand and engage with their instructional materials, with a purposeful focus on inclusion, justice and honoring the dignity of all students. They also understand that the discomfort of tackling these issues head-on with their professional community is worth the payoff of ensuring that each student in the room is getting the education that they deserve.

Read more about Component 4e [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to growing and developing professionally, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Curiosity and Autonomy

Teachers identify personal and professional growth areas and independently seek opportunities to develop and refine their knowledge.

Developing Cultural Competence

Teachers seek knowledge regarding the students and community they serve and apply findings to their practice and development of the school culture.

Enhancing Knowledge and Skills

Teachers work to deepen content and pedagogical knowledge and exchange new learning with colleagues.

Seeking and Acting on Feedback

Teachers seek opportunities to receive and provide feedback and work collaboratively and constructively to utilize feedback effectively.

In what ways do teachers engage in their own professional development and growth and the development and growth of their professional community?

- ✓ The teacher seeks out opportunities to deepen their understanding of the use of HQIM to promote equity in their classroom outcomes.
- ✓ The teacher collaborates within their professional community and contributes to the growth and development of others.
- ✓ The teacher continually addresses and grows their cultural competence, readily taking accountability for mistakes.



PRIORITIES

- Seeking opportunities to more deeply understand and engage with the materials and curricula in use in your classroom with a purposeful focus on inclusion.
- Seeking opportunities to expand knowledge and understanding of the students, families, and community you work in.
- Engaging in directed learning about equity and oppression in our society and in education.
- Creating a candid relationship with colleagues and regularly examining classroom practices for their impact on equity.

START HERE

- » Find at least one professional community, either in person or online, that can support your development in areas of equity and justice.
- » Seek feedback from peers, coaches, or supervisors on your highest priority growth areas and create an initial plan of action.
- » Participate in community building activities (events with the sole purpose of getting to know each other better) with the school community, parents, and larger community, or plan some activities of your own.
- » Build a habit of seeking feedback from those you interact with and impact, both students and colleagues, and be willing to readily admit mistakes and engage in your own personal work to restore relationships when needed.
- » Seek out and bookmark reliable and trusted resources that you can consistently refer to and turn to when you need additional information, context, or support.
- » Attend professional development sessions to learn more about your curriculum or instructional materials.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Start or join a book club or journal club that explores themes of identity and oppression in education.
- » Identify role models in your school community and ask them for advice on developing your equity-focused practice.
- » Create or join a professional community that focuses on using the HQIM in service of increased equity in educational outcomes.
- » Choose professional development opportunities, such as seminars or conferences, that have an anti-racist focus.
- » Share your goals around equity with your colleagues and ask for specific ways you can develop.
- » Challenge yourself to find new growth opportunities in your professional practice.
- » Film your lesson, share it with a trusted colleague and ask them to evaluate the lesson from an equity focused perspective.

STAGE 02

ARRANGING FOR LEARNING

Tailoring Materials to Meet Students' Needs

SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES (1c)

How does setting instructional outcomes support teaching important content with HQIM?

Instructional outcomes are not only academic. Learning serves a broader purpose in one's personal development. How we grow and learn impacts our self-esteem, emotional health, status in society, future opportunities, and more. When implementing standards-aligned materials in support of teaching important content, teachers should examine the summative tasks and assessments—what students will need to be able to do at the end of each lesson and at the end of each unit of study—before they begin to teach the material to their students. Teachers who also want to evaluate how students will need to develop academically, socially and emotionally to achieve the intended goals and outcomes are better able to analyze the activities that build to those outcomes. By considering the strengths, knowledge, skills, preferences, and personality traits of the students they are teaching, effective teachers use this knowledge to communicate not only the academic outcomes, but also the broader social and emotional implications for students as individuals and members of society.

A primary barrier to equity when setting instructional outcomes is when educators do not have or set the same high standards for all students. Because of biases, sometimes explicit but more often unconscious, sometimes teachers do not genuinely believe that certain populations of students or individuals in their classroom can master grade-level or higher standards. It's crucial that all educators uncover these beliefs and work to change them. Instructional outcomes should be informed by HQIM, reflect the real world, highlight the impact this important learning will have, and increase student agency in their present context. When teachers know what the instructional outcomes are and where their students strengths and growth areas are now, then they can determine what supports students may need to meet the intended outcomes. When teachers communicate the intended learning outcomes to their students, they become partners in a constructive, collaborative strategy to help students achieve their learning goals.

Read more about Component 1c [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to setting instructional outcomes, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Value and Relevance

Instructional outcomes represent ambitious learning of important content and meaningful opportunities to support student learning and development.

Alignment to Grade-Level Standards

Instructional outcomes reflect appropriate grade-level standards and communicate high expectations for each and every student.

Clarity of Purpose

Instructional outcomes clearly define what will be learned, why it is important, and how students will develop and demonstrate mastery of content and skills.

Integration of Multiple Aspects of Student Development

Instructional outcomes integrate academic and social-emotional development to complement and build on one another.

How are clear, specific instructional outcomes used to define the purpose of learning experiences?

- ✓ Instructional outcomes represent high-level learning of important content and support student autonomy, curiosity, and intellectual risk-taking.
- ✓ Instructional outcomes consistently reflect grade-level standards that challenge all students in the class and encourage intellectual risk-taking.
- ✓ Instructional outcomes integrate academic, social-emotional, and character development goals rather than treating them separately.

PRIORITIES

- Ensuring that proposed learning outcomes represent grade-level achievement goals and appropriate personal development for each student.
- Sharing accountability for attainment of learning goals with students.
- Developing methods to communicate with students around instructional outcomes.
- Reviewing and auditing all instructional materials to ensure that they align with and reflect the intended learning outcomes.

START HERE

- » Unpack your grade-level standards and identify the learning milestones students will have to meet to reach the learning outcomes.
- » Identify and select materials, assessments within HQIM as well as supplemental resources that will support students in the acquisition of the identified learning milestones and outcomes.
- » Communicate to students and stakeholders what students will learn and how they will learn it using student-friendly language.
- » Create a tool box of flexible evaluation methods that can be used to assess various learning outcomes.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Connect the learning outcomes to authentic circumstances or students' interests.
- » Give students a visual road-map of the learning milestones and frequently revisit where the students are on the journey toward the learning outcomes.
- » Help students analyze their formative data to understand their level of mastery of learning outcomes.
- » Create a classroom culture that values formative data as a tool to inform decisions in the next steps in the learning process.
- » When applicable, allow students to choose from a selection or create their own task or activity that meets the learning objective.
- » Communicate some of the steps you take as an instructor to help students achieve their learning outcomes.
- » Consider gathering student feedback on whether they feel supported in achieving their academic and personal goals through your instruction.
- » Practice conducting regular informal evaluations of student progress towards learning goals through casual conversation or observing student interactions.



USING RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY (1d)

How does using resources effectively support teaching important content with HQIM?

Component 1d, using resources to support students' learning and development, is part of every teacher's responsibility. One of the respected qualities of HQIM is the breadth and depth of resources available to help teachers effectively teach important content to all students. When the DG considers using HQIM resources effectively in support of teaching important content, we are referring to curricular print, technology and digital resources, as well as mixed media extracurricular resources aligned to the content. To use HQIM effectively, teachers will benefit from becoming intimately familiar with the materials and the philosophies of teaching and learning represented in the materials before using them for the first time. In most cases, high-quality materials will include digital and technological components. In other cases, teachers will need to outsource supplemental digital components in order to customize instruction for their students. Teachers also support the whole person development of each student, recognizing socio-emotional gaps and then creatively seeking to fill them with suitable people and program examples that align with their students' motivations, interests, and desires. These three facets work together to holistically allow teachers to utilize HQIM to effectively teach important content.

When instructional resources are used effectively in the implementation of standards-aligned curriculum, all students have access to important content and are able to achieve at the same levels. HQIM provide multiple, varied academic, technological, and extracurricular resources so that they can be used by all students, but not necessarily across the board in the same way for everyone. Teachers may also need to provide additional resources for individual students in order for them to gain access to appropriate resources. When teachers know their communities, they can recommend resources outside that classroom that will benefit and support students both academically and personally.

Read more about Component 1d [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to using resources effectively, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Instructional Materials

Teachers utilize high-quality instructional materials to ensure access to rigorous content and support specific student needs, furthering engagement and mastery.

Technology and Digital Resources

Technological and digital resources support personalized instruction, equitable learning, engagement, exploration, connection, and student development.

Supports for Students

Teachers seek and provide additional aligned resources and supports that make content and curriculum materials accessible to students and address their individual needs.

How do teachers effectively use HQIM to meet the needs of individual students?

- ✓ The teacher understands and uses instructional materials and other resources to support student learning and development.
- ✓ The teacher's knowledge of instructional materials and other resources leads to discerning choices to support learning and development.
- ✓ The teacher makes deliberate decisions in the use of instructional materials and other resources to meet individual student needs and support student autonomy.



PRIORITIES

- Supporting students by recommending specific scaffolds or community resources.
- Teaching the technological skills necessary to complete assignments and assessments and participate in activities.
- Providing supplementary materials that affirm the present reality for students.
- Always choosing supplemental instructional materials that meet the standards for “high-quality.”

START HERE

- » Work from your provided HQIM, or select curricula and materials that meet rigorous quality standards as identified by a trusted external source.
- » Identify supplementary high-quality instructional materials that can be used to teach technical and computer-based skills.
- » Enrich materials and activities with references to events, people, or places that students know.
- » Create a list of community resources and how they can support students’ personal and academic development.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Use digital resources to personalize instructional pathways for student learning and development.
- » When applicable, supplement instructional materials with other high-quality resources such as texts, visuals, manipulatives, models, videos, or simulations.
- » Preview all supplemental materials to ensure they are aligned to the age- and grade-level learning standards and meet the standards of high-quality instructional materials.
- » Create a choice board of high-quality resources and supplemental materials. Allow students to choose which activities they want to use to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives.
- » Participate in lesson design meetings with other teachers that teach the same curricula to exchange information on best practices regarding equity and inclusion.
- » Observe a high-performing teacher to gain insights on new ways to utilize instructional materials.
- » Invite a community member to be a guest speaker, have students interview local leaders, or design solutions to a community challenge.



PLANNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION (1e)

How does planning coherent instruction support teaching important content with HQIM?

Component 1e asks teachers to apply knowledge of their students, content, curricular materials, and resources to the design and implementation of instructional plans. Teachers need to be able to answer the question: “How will students learn?” One of the principal benefits of using well-designed, standards-aligned instructional materials is that the primary unit and lesson design work has been completed.

However, teachers understand that planning coherent instruction is much more complex than implementing a generic plan. High-quality materials allow educators to focus on curating the learning experience (rather than on what to teach) in order to make the content accessible to all students. They use their expertise to build engaging educational arcs that weave threads of inquiry, student interests, current events, and culturally relevant content into rich educational experiences, which helps students of all identities and backgrounds access and authentically engage with important content. These rich learning experiences have a profound impact on students and help them to develop a lifelong love for learning.

Teachers often feel they are fighting an uphill battle to provide students with what they need to be successful. Providing coherent instruction can be especially challenging when working with populations that have been historically underserved. Educators sometimes worry that standards-aligned materials may not appropriately address their students’ social, physical, and emotional needs. While high-quality instructional materials provide teachers with a solid foundation to plan for and deliver coherent instruction, teachers are the experts on their students and the context in which they work. Effective teachers use that expertise to understand how to best adapt the HQIM so that each student is able to achieve their educational goals while maintaining high standards for instructional outcomes.

Read more about Component 1e [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to planning coherent instruction, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Tasks and Activities

Tasks and activities are specifically matched to learning outcomes, encourage higher-level thinking and student agency, and create authentic opportunities to engage with meaningful content.

Flexible Learning

Multiple strategies and approaches are tailored to individual student needs to create the appropriate level of challenge and support for each student.

Student Collaboration

Student groups are an essential component of learning and development, and are organized thoughtfully to maximize opportunities and build on students’ strengths.

Structure and Flow

Lesson and unit plans are well structured and flow from one to the next to support student learning and development.

How are learning experiences structured to provide flexible, student-centered opportunities to learn important content and develop positive habits and mindsets?

- ✓ Learning opportunities are coherent in structure and suitable for the students in the class.
- ✓ Learning opportunities are specifically tailored to meet the needs of individual students in the class.
- ✓ Learning opportunities prioritize the needs of individual students and support student assumption of responsibility for learning.



PRIORITIES

- Learning student preferences for instruction, assessment, educational experiences and learning activities.
- Identifying opportunities to co-create educational experiences with students.
- Ensuring all elements of the learning experience are cohesive and support students in achieving the learning outcomes.

START HERE

- » Develop methods to collect and update information about students' preferences in educational experiences.
- » Design constructivist learning experiences in which each element gradually builds upon a student's prior knowledge and skills to reach the learning goal.
- » Develop routines in the learning experience in which students reflect on the learning tasks completed and identify the knowledge and skills they gained.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Begin each instructional unit with a phenomena or real world problem that will excite students and get them curious to learn.
- » Find opportunities within the HQIM for students to collaborate and work together as a team over multiple lessons or topics.
- » Stick to grade-level materials, and monitor students in the moment to provide just-in-time instruction when needed.
- » Ask open-ended questions, but do not provide students with definitive answers. Allow them to continue to develop their responses over time.
- » Compare formative and summative assessment data to evaluate whether student misconceptions have been corrected or addressed.
- » Encourage students to work together and lean on their peers as an additional resource.
- » Ask students to reflect on how their prior knowledge and experiences are related to the learning.
- » Frequently recall previous content and connect it to present learning.

Designing and Analyzing Assessments (1f)

How does designing and analyzing assessments support teaching important content with HQIM?

Component 1f plays a critical role in learning and serves as a powerful instructional tool for teachers. Formative (*for* learning) and summative (*of* learning) assessments are how we know that learning is occurring or has occurred. When working with vetted instructional materials, teachers need to understand the different purposes of the assessments included in their materials and resources, as well as what is being assessed and how. More importantly, teachers need to understand how to analyze and use the data generated by these assessments to support their students' success. Effective teachers informally check often for understanding in the midst of an activity, and use the results to inform their next instructional moves, or choose one summative assessment question to use as a gauge of the effectiveness of a certain technique or method of instruction. Teachers use what they learn from analyzing assessments to adjust instruction and put standards-aligned materials to their most effective use.

Equity-minded teachers use formative and summative assessment techniques and results to measure and record the achievement and growth of all students in their classroom. HQIM include multiple assessment opportunities that provide teachers with evidence that their implementation of curricular materials and resources is having the intended positive impact on each student. If they find that their efforts towards equity have not had the desired effect, then they undergo deep analysis and reflection, armed with reliable information on how students are responding to the instruction. Effective teachers look for opportunities to address and close any existing gaps in understanding. Through this iterative process, design and analysis of assessment data can support equitable student outcomes.

Read more about Component 1f [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to designing and analyzing assessments, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Congruence with Instructional Outcomes

Aligned assessments provide accurate, clear evidence and allow for the analysis of student understanding and mastery of instructional outcomes.

Criteria and Standards

Criteria and standards for assessment are appropriate and aligned, clearly communicated, and whenever possible have been developed with student input.

Planning Formative Assessments

Teachers plan formative assessments to monitor student progress toward instructional outcomes, make needed adjustments, and support students to assume responsibility for their learning.

Analysis and Application

Teachers consistently use assessment data to direct planning and preparation and to support individualized student instruction.

How is assessment data collected, analyzed, and applied to inform instructional decision-making by teachers and students?

- ✓ Assessments help the teacher determine whether students have learned or are learning the intended outcomes.
- ✓ Assessments are planned throughout the instructional process and provide timely and valuable information to teachers and feedback to students.
- ✓ Students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content, set goals, and analyze their own progress through multiple, flexible assessments.

PRIORITIES

- Developing flexibility to utilize varied and multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes.
- Evaluating assessment materials for bias, either in structure or content.
- Analyzing outcomes from the HQIM's assessments to reveal misunderstandings, determine what has not been learned yet, inform instructional decisions, and support student agency.
- Using HQIM's assessment data as a self-reflection tool to evaluate the effectiveness of a teacher's instructional strategies.

START HERE

- » Plan to assess students in the way they are most likely to be able to demonstrate success, individualizing assessment types to suit different students' strengths and assets.
- » Audit provided assessment materials for bias that may impact equity in the outcomes and make adjustments where needed.
- » Analyze outcomes of formative assessments to identify any evidence of inequity in progress towards academic goals.
- » Perform self-evaluations at regular intervals to make sure that your efforts towards equitable education are proving effective.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Involve students in the development of success criteria and analysis of assessments.
- » Analyze outcomes from the summative assessments to determine if students have, in fact, achieved the instructional outcomes.
- » Use a variety of learning tasks as assessments for each learning milestone such as performance tasks, written responses, diagramming a concept, multiple-choice questions, or group discussions.
- » Communicate to students that all learning tasks will be used as an assessment for learning even though all learning tasks might not be entered into the grade book.
- » Use assessment data as a self-reflection tool and be willing to readjust your approach if the data indicates that the learning outcomes were not achieved.
- » Communicate with students the clear and specific success criteria. When possible, give students a rubric and a variety of examples.
- » Develop a variety of methods to reteach, reinforce, or extend student understanding of the learning that was assessed.
- » Reassess students after giving them an opportunity to relearn concepts and skills.

STAGE 03

TEACHING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Using Materials to Engage Students in
Cohesive, Affirming Learning Experiences

COMMUNICATING ABOUT PURPOSE AND CONTENT (3a)

How does communicating about purpose and content support teaching important content with HQIM?

Good teaching requires purposeful and effective communication. Effective teachers must use clear and engaging language, accurately convey academic content, make learning meaningful and relevant, deliver instructions, and set expectations constantly and consistently throughout each lesson and school day. This requires a level of skill and commitment that is not easy to come by, but when an educator is deeply familiar with the standards-aligned materials they use, communicating about that academic content becomes much easier. Communication is not only verbal or written, but also occurs through nonverbal means such as body language, tone, attitude, positionality, and more. In order to create the conditions for effective learning, teachers must attend to their own nonverbal cues as well as pick up on those of their students. Successful teachers also recognize that communication is a two-way process. Teachers not only need to speak so that students will listen and comprehend, they also must listen with the purpose of understanding their students and their progress in the process of acquiring new knowledge.

A failure to communicate clearly about purpose and content with students can lead to a lack of understanding of what they are learning or why. Students who are supported with strong, effective communication have more success achieving learning outcomes than those who are not. Equity-minded teachers ask students to engage critically with the content and answer for themselves why the learning is important and the impact it can have on themselves and their communities. Equity-minded educators also encourage students to engage critically with the learning materials by asking them to consider who created the materials, how, and for what purpose. This meaningful and purposeful engagement allows all students multiple access points to authentically engage with and benefit from standards-based instructional materials.

Read more about Component 3a [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to communicating about purpose and content, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Purpose for Learning and Criteria for Success

Teachers communicate the goals and objectives of learning activities and outline an instructional pathway for students to meet the established criteria for success.

Specific Expectations

Student actions during each step of learning activities are clearly and effectively communicated with specific expectations articulated and reinforced throughout.

Explanations of Content

Content knowledge is scaffolded and presented in multiple, engaging ways with frequent, integrated checks for student understanding.

Use of Academic Language

Verbal and written content-related language used by teachers and students is academically rigorous, accurate, and subject and grade appropriate.

How do teachers use communication to improve students' academic success?

- ✓ The teacher's communication with students is clear and accurate and supports student learning.
- ↓
- ✓ The teacher's communication supports students' active engagement in the learning experience and models effective use of language.
- ↓
- ✓ The teacher's communication is rich and nuanced, inviting students to think critically and contribute intellectually; it encourages curiosity and supports student autonomy.



PRIORITIES

- Creating opportunities for students to spend time considering what is important about what they are learning and why.
- Understanding and being able to communicate the positive impact that mastery of important content can have on the student and their community.
- Encouraging students to engage critically with the content and evaluate its impact on their perception of themselves and others.

START HERE

- » Ask open-ended questions about what students are learning and why.
- » Regularly share with students the intended positive academic and non-academic impact of mastering important content.
- » Create opportunities to gather feedback on the impact the curriculum and materials are having on students' perception of themselves and others.
- » Ask critical thinking questions about the materials and content to build a habit of high-level inquiry.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Host regular virtual or in-person office hours focused on the previous week's learning goals, strategies, and misconceptions that students may struggle with understanding.
- » Be willing to respond constructively to students who question the purpose or benefit of tasks or activities.
- » Research the origin of your curriculum or instructional materials and the people and/or businesses that created them.
- » Use what you know about individual students to clearly communicate how achieving their learning goals will positively impact them.
- » When explaining content, use affirming references with which students are familiar.
- » Ask students to generate analogies. Take it a step further by having them evaluate each others' work.
- » Communicate important concepts using grade-level appropriate academic language as well as conversational or colloquial language.
- » Build a habit of quickly and informally checking for understanding any time important information is shared with students.

USING ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (3d)

How does using assessment for learning support teaching important content with HQIM?

While assessments of learning are essential and have often been more heavily emphasized by policymakers, teachers have long known that assessment *for* learning is a powerful and important tool. Component 3d specifically refers to formative assessments—assessments used to determine the progress of students within the process of acquiring new knowledge. High-quality instructional materials will have these assessments prescribed for educators. Skilled teachers will also develop their own methods of formal and informal formative assessment to gather the data they find most meaningful and that most helps them deliver instruction that resonates with each of their students. Effective formative assessments are also educational experiences. When asked to respond to them, students learn how to think critically and apply their skills and knowledge to demonstrate understanding of the learning objectives. The ongoing and embedded use of formative assessment to demonstrate “how their learning is going” gives students another way to engage with educational materials that is enriching for their personal development and helps them to achieve their goals.

In respectful and affirming learning environments, effective teachers ensure all assessment experiences are collaborative and cause neither shame nor exclusion. Helping students understand the rhythm and purpose of assessments is crucial to creating a collaborative atmosphere. Equity-minded teachers are always looking for ways to better understand how their students are progressing toward learning targets and goals. Standards-aligned materials will likely include multiple resources for formative assessment. Teachers will use these as a starting point, finding innovative ways to gather and share student data regarding progress towards learning goals. The end goal is for teachers and students together to find a way to achieve their instructional outcomes.

Read more about Component 3d [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to using assessment for learning, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Clear Standards for Success

Collaborative goals, the characteristics of high-quality work, and the criteria established as evidence of success are clear to students and those supporting them.

Monitoring Student Understanding

Teachers and students are constantly monitoring learning and making use of specific strategies to elicit evidence of understanding.

Timely, Constructive Feedback

High-quality feedback comes from many sources, including students; it is specific and focused on improvement.

How do teachers and students use assessments to elicit evidence of understanding, analyze progress, and provide constructive feedback?



The standards of high-quality work and success are clear to students and provide the opportunity for self-assessment.



The teacher uses questions and assessments to elicit accurate evidence of student understanding and models strategies for self-assessment, allowing students to successfully analyze their own progress toward goals.



Students make decisions and assume responsibility for their learning using high-quality, improvement-focused feedback from many sources.



PRIORITIES

- Establishing a routine of generating, analyzing, reflecting on, and responding to formative assessment data.
- Building a toolbox of different methods to informally gather formative assessment data from students to inform teacher decision making.
- Practicing sharing formative data in a way that is asset-focused, constructive, and affirming.
- Utilizing formative assessment data to ensure that each student achieves appropriate grade level academic goals.

START HERE

- » Plan where and when in your curriculum you will regularly collect formative data, and share this plan explicitly with students.
- » Design a variety of assessments using questions, assignments, performance tasks, discussions, and activities.
- » Communicate to students the purpose of collecting formative data and how it will be used to support their personal and academic success.
- » Analyze formative assessment data as quickly as possible and use that data to adjust instruction to help each student achieve learning goals.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Allow students to design formative assessments and to assess each other.
- » Ask students how they would prefer their formative assessment data to be used and communicated to them.
- » Provide students feedback on their assessment in a timely manner so that it is relevant and plays a role in deciding the next steps in learning.
- » Support students in analyzing and understanding their own assessment data.
- » Use formative assessment data to determine which instructional strategies are having the greatest positive impact on equity in your classroom.
- » Consider creating digital assessments that provide students immediate feedback.
- » Give students choice in how they demonstrate their progress toward mastery of the content and skills.
- » Collaborate with colleagues on which questions from the curriculum or instructional materials that best assess students' level of prior knowledge for the content and skills being taught.

ENGAGING IN REFLECTIVE PRACTICE (4a)

How does engaging in reflective practice support teaching important content with HQIM?

While teachers often reflect on and analyze the learning experience, Component 4a asks teachers to engage more broadly in self-assessment and reflection activities about their practice. Component 4a refers not only to reflecting on the activities that occur within the classroom, but also the educator's broader context as a teacher, their background, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs, and how these may impact learning for their students. Many teachers have feelings or biases for or against implementation of HQIM in their classrooms. These biases must be acknowledged and examined carefully so that instructional materials are (a) implemented with fidelity without (b) overly relying on the materials to "do the teaching" for you. Effective teachers make opportunities for reflection regularly and always before, during, and after a school year, semester, or unit of study. Successful educators also engage other trusted professionals, colleagues, coaches, or supervisors to help them to reflect on and refine their practice to continually grow and develop in support of their students' success.

The status quo for too many students in our country is one of inequity. Without consistent and iterative reflective practice, this status quo cannot be disrupted. High-quality instructional materials are not a one-size-fits-all solution to our racial equity issues. Equity-focused teachers are always asking themselves two questions: *What is happening in my classroom?* and *What can I do to make it better?* They set personal goals and measure their progress. Effective teachers consider the success of each individual student and hold themselves personally accountable for making sure students achieve. They understand that what occurs each day is the result of their own mindset and beliefs about their students, their values, and their abilities—and they act on that understanding.

Read more about Component 4a [here](#) to deepen understanding of how each element of success contributes to engaging in reflective practice, as well as knowledge of how it will be observed in your planning practices.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

Self-Assessment of Teaching

Teachers use evidence from activities and assessments to identify the impact of different elements of practice on student learning and evaluate the success of learning experiences.

Analysis and Discovery

Based on their self-assessment, teachers consider alternative approaches or perspectives, question their own ideas or beliefs, and learn new ways to further advance student learning.

Application and Continuous Improvement

Teachers demonstrate commitment to the success of all students by planning, practicing, and trying new approaches to enhance their teaching based on their assessment and analysis.

How do teachers utilize multiple sources of evidence to analyze their practice and the effectiveness of their instruction?

- ✓ The teacher draws on evidence from the lesson to assess the effectiveness of specific elements of instruction and their impact on student learning and development.
- ✓ The teacher analyzes the impact of practices and beliefs on student learning and consistently acquires new knowledge and skills to enhance learning for students who need it the most.
- ✓ Based on reflection, the teacher considers multiple paths forward, focuses on the best course of action for student success, and demonstrates perseverance in the face of challenges.



PRIORITIES

- Creating a routine of reflection, analysis, and development planning that allows for continual growth and improvement.
- Developing and embracing a growth mindset when it comes to professional practice and student achievement.
- Actively working to uncover biases and deficit-based beliefs, then challenging and disrupting this thinking.
- Taking full responsibility for the development and achievement of each and every student in your classroom.

START HERE

- » Choose a method for your regular reflection practice - it can be a journal, voice or video recording, a specially designed digital tool or app, or something else.
- » Write development plans that focus on opportunities instead of challenges or weaknesses.
- » Partner with a trusted colleague to candidly discuss issues, blind spots, and growth areas when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- » Create a plan to monitor and reflect on the progress of each student.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

- » Invite a mentor, coach, instructional leader or colleague to observe you teach and provide meaningful feedback about your instructional practices. Alternatively, you can share a recording of a lesson you have taught.
- » Observe a high performing colleague and reflect on the strategies they use to engage learners.
- » Ask students to provide you feedback about the lessons that were most engaging and relevant to their learning.
- » Demonstrate continual improvement in a way that encourages and emboldens students to develop their own reflective practice.
- » Seek or create regular opportunities for collaboration and reflection with other teachers both more and less experienced than you.
- » Find and utilize sources of new ideas, these can be professional development opportunities or high-quality social media content.
- » Create an intra-identity conversation club to meet and discuss how to address issues or understand new ideas.
- » Create an inter-identity conversation club to discuss issues that affect the community or student population and how to best address them as instructors.



AN INVITATION

It is our sincere hope that the content in this guide will help you focus on the success of all students by supporting the skilled implementation of HQIM in all classrooms for all learners. The effective implementation of rich, standards-aligned materials and resources has the potential to fundamentally reset the purpose, practices, and outcome of public education in this country. Recent changes to The Framework for Teaching reflect the importance of planning and preparation practices that result from the availability of high-quality instructional materials.

We hope that the FFT and the specific guidance included here will support teachers as they continue to work relentlessly on behalf of students with dignity and grace. The principles of effective pedagogy and our commitment to equity and racial justice will continue to drive our work. Our understanding will evolve as we learn more from you and with you about teaching for racial justice, so that we can continue to share the knowledge of the field and build equitable learning environments where all teachers and students can thrive. We invite all educators to join us in the work of applying the enduring principles of the FFT to the needs of your present moment.