

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2010 Common Core of Teaching: Foundational Skills

Introduction

I. A Vision for Teaching and Learning in Connecticut Public Schools

The CCT (CCT) articulates the knowledge, skills and qualities that Connecticut teachers need in order to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

In the 21st century, the increasingly complex needs of students require sophisticated teaching strategies. As stated in Wagner (2008), Wagner et al. (2006) and cited in *Connecticut's Plan for Secondary School Reform*, “the old ‘basics’ of reading, writing, and mathematics are still essential, but not sufficient. Today’s and tomorrow’s students must learn to locate, analyze, interpret and communicate information in a variety of media and formats, and solve problems creatively and logically. Living and competing successfully in a global society and economy will require an understanding of our interconnectedness, collaboration and leadership skills, habits of personal and social responsibility, and adaptability to change.” Teachers must help students foster the academic and social competence to become both independent and interdependent learners and workers who can successfully navigate a rapidly changing world.

The effectiveness of Connecticut schools depends upon skillful teaching. Teacher quality is one of the most significant contributors to student learning and achievement; what teachers know and do directly influences what students learn (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rice, 2003; National Council for Teacher Quality, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Goe & Stickler, 2008). Effective teachers have deep knowledge of their content area and can present core ideas of the discipline in clear, compelling ways. They engage students in stimulating, challenging learning, support exploration of content, and lead students toward developing critical reasoning and leadership skills. They create [rigorous and relevant](#)¹ learning experiences characterized by higher-order thinking and the application of knowledge and skills in the world beyond the four walls of school.

The philosophy behind the CCT is that teaching requires more than simply demonstrating a certain set of technical skills. It requires command of subject matter and pedagogical skills combined with caring deeply about students and their successes. Effective teaching also requires:

- ◆ a deep commitment to student achievement and the belief that *all* students should be challenged to achieve,
- ◆ a willingness to work in collaboration with colleagues and families to meet the diverse learning needs of all students, and
- ◆ a commitment to analysis of one’s teaching and continuous professional development.

The best teachers model a passion for learning and ignite the curiosity of their students. Teachers help students develop a sense of who they want to be in the world and find their own passions and directions for future learning.

¹ Rigorous learning stretches students beyond their “comfort zone,” focusing on integrating knowledge in various disciplines and the world at large. Rigor in this context does not refer to difficulty of a course or content. Rigor is motivated by relevance which refers to helping students understand how their learning connects to their further studies and future work settings. (Wagner, 2006)

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To be a passionate teacher is to be someone in love with a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class each day ...only when teachers bring their passions about learning and life into their daily work can they dispel the fog of passive compliance or active disinterest that surrounds so many students... (Fried, 1995)

II. The Structure of the CCT

The CCT contains teaching standards which describe two levels of effective knowledge, skills and qualities:

1. The six domains and 46 indicators that identify the foundational skills and competencies that pertain to all teachers, regardless of the subject matter, field or age group they teach; and
2. The discipline-specific professional teaching standards that further define and expand the definition of effective teaching within a particular subject matter or field.

III. Uses of the CCT

The CCT is linked by state law and regulations to requirements across a teacher's career including preparation, induction and teacher evaluation:

Career Phase	Uses of the CCT
Preparation & Pre-Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ State Program Approval and NCATE Accreditation to ensure that preparation programs are aligned with state teaching standards◆ Guidance and information for testing of candidates seeking certification (Praxis I, Praxis II, etc.)◆ Standards for evaluation of field and student teaching experiences
Beginning Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Standards for state and district induction of beginning teachers◆ Foundation for teacher evaluation and professional development
Experienced Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Foundation for teacher evaluation and professional development

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Overview

The Common Core of Teaching articulates the art and science of teaching as essential knowledge, skills and qualities. These foundational skills and competencies are grouped by domains but, in practice, are to be viewed as integrated parts of the complex and dynamic process of effective teaching. The CCT should be used to help guide and build teacher competence beginning with pre-service and continuing throughout a teacher's career.

Domains of Teacher Performance

Domain 1. Content and Essential Skills:

Teachers understand and apply essential skills, central concepts and tools of inquiry in their subject matter or field.

Domain 2. Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning:

Teachers promote student engagement, independence and interdependence in learning by facilitating a positive learning community.

Domain 3. Planning for Active Learning:

Teachers plan instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large.

Domain 4. Instruction for Active Learning:

Teachers implement instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large.

Domain 5. Assessment for Learning:

Teachers use multiple measures to analyze student performance and to inform subsequent planning and instruction.

Domain 6. Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership:

Teachers maximize support for student learning by developing and demonstrating professionalism, collaboration with others, and leadership.

On the following pages, the detailed indicators of each of the six core domains are outlined.

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Domain 1. Content and Essential Skills:

Teachers understand and apply essential skills, central concepts and tools of inquiry in their subject matter or field by:

- 1.1 Demonstrating proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics skills;
- 1.2 Demonstrating discipline-specific knowledge and skills as described in the relevant national and state professional teaching standards;
- 1.3 Using developmentally appropriate verbal, non-verbal and technological communications;
- 1.4 Using technological and digital resources to promote learning, collaboration with colleagues and communication within a learning community;
- 1.5 Demonstrating understanding of how to use content area literacy skills to enable students to construct meaning through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting; and
- 1.6 Demonstrating understanding of how to use content area numeracy and analytical skills to enable students to problem solve, interpret and use data and numerical representations.

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Domain 2. Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning

Teachers promote student engagement, independence and interdependence in learning by facilitating a positive learning community by:

- 2.1 Creating a class climate that is responsive to and respectful of the [learning needs of students](#)² with diverse backgrounds, interests and performance levels;
- 2.2 Promoting engagement in and shared responsibility for the learning process and providing opportunities for students to initiate their own questions and inquiries;
- 2.3 Providing explicit instruction about social skills to develop students' [social competence](#)³ and responsible and ethical behavior by using a continuum of [proactive strategies](#)⁴ that may be individualized to student needs;
- 2.4 Fostering appropriate standards of behavior that support a productive learning environment for all students; and
- 2.5 Maximizing the amount of time spent on learning by effectively managing [routines and transitions](#)⁵.

² Addressing **student learning needs** includes understanding typical and atypical growth and development of PK-12 students including characteristics and functioning of students with disabilities, gifted students, and English language learners. Teachers understand the impact of culture, language, poverty and environment on the learning needs of students.

³ **Social competence** "is observed when a person demonstrates the competencies that constitute self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills at appropriate times and ways in sufficient frequency to be effective in the situation." (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000).

⁴ **Proactive strategies** include self-regulation strategies, problem-solving strategies, conflict resolution processes, interpersonal communication and responsible decision making.

⁵ **Routines** are non-instructional organizational activities such as attendance, or distribution of materials in preparation for instruction. **Transitions** are non-instructional activities such as moving from one classroom activity, grouping, task or context to another.

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Domain 3. Planning for Active Learning:

Teachers plan instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by:

- 3.1 Determining students' prior knowledge to ensure that content instruction is at an appropriate level of challenge and differentiated to meet their [learning needs](#)²;
- 3.2 Developing and organizing coherent and relevant units, lessons and learning tasks that build on students' prior knowledge, skills and interests and engage students in the work of the discipline;
- 3.3 Promoting the development and application of skills with conceptual understanding, and anticipating students' content misconceptions;
- 3.4 Selecting appropriate assessment strategies to monitor ongoing student progress;
- 3.5 Selecting or designing instructional strategies, [resources](#)⁶ and flexible groupings that provide opportunity for students to think critically and creatively, and solve problems;
- 3.6 Integrating learning activities that make real-world, career or global connections, and promote interdisciplinary connections whenever possible;
- 3.7 Designing or selecting academic and/or behavioral interventions through differentiated, supplemental, specialized instruction for students who do not respond to primary instruction alone;
- 3.8 Designing strategic questions and opportunities that appropriately challenge students and actively engage them in exploring the content through strategies such as [discourse](#)⁷ and/or [inquiry-based learning](#)⁸; and
- 3.9 Including strategies for teaching and supporting content area literacy skills and, when appropriate, numeracy skills.

⁶ **Instructional resources** may include materials, technology, and other support personnel such as paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, special service staff, or other educators.

⁷ **Discourse** is defined as the purposeful interaction between and among teachers and students, in which ideas and multiple perspectives are represented, communicated and challenged, with the goal of creating greater meaning or understanding. Discourse can be oral dialogue (conversation), written dialogue (reaction, thoughts, feedback), visual dialogue (charts, graphs, paintings or images that represent student and teacher thinking/reasoning), or dialogue through technological or digital resources.

⁸ **Inquiry-based learning** is based on a philosophy of constructivism, in which students generate knowledge and meaning from their experiences and work collectively or individually to study a problem or answer a question. Work is often structured around projects that require students to engage in the solution of a particular community-based, school-based or regional or global problem which has relevance to their world. The teacher's role in inquiry-based learning is one of facilitator or resource, rather than dispenser of knowledge.

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Domain 4. Instruction for Active Learning:

Teachers implement instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by:

- 4.1 Using a variety of evidence-based strategies to enable students to apply and construct new learning;
- 4.2 Using technological and digital resources strategically to promote learning;
- 4.3 Leading students to construct meaning through the use of active learning strategies such as purposeful [discourse](#)⁷ and/or [inquiry-based learning](#)⁸;
- 4.4 Varying the student and [teacher roles](#)⁹ in ways that develop independence and interdependence with the gradual release of responsibility to students;
- 4.5 Using differentiated instruction and supplemental interventions to support students with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or particular gifts and talents;
- 4.6 Monitoring student learning and adjusting teaching during instruction in response to student performance and engagement in learning tasks; and
- 4.7 Providing meaningful, appropriate and specific feedback to students during instruction to improve their performance.

⁹ Teachers vary their roles by knowing when to provide information, clarify an issue, model, lead or let students grapple with issues or questions.

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Domain 5. Assessment for Learning

Teachers use multiple measures to analyze student performance and to inform subsequent planning and instruction by:

- 5.1 Understanding the different [purposes](#)¹⁰ and [types of assessment](#)¹¹ that capture the complexity of student learning across the [hierarchy of cognitive skills](#)¹²;
- 5.2 Using and/or designing a variety of [formative](#)¹³ and [summative](#)¹⁴ assessments and criteria that directly align with the learning objectives and value the diversity of ways in which students learn;
- 5.3 Using a comprehensive set of data that provides depth and breadth of understanding of student achievement at a particular point in time and over time;
- 5.4 Collaborating with colleagues to review and interpret assessment data to monitor and adjust instruction to ensure students' progress;
- 5.5 Providing students with assessment criteria and individualized, descriptive feedback to help them improve their performance and assume responsibility for their learning;
- 5.6 Supporting students' progress by communicating academic and behavioral performance expectations and results with students, their families and other educators;
- 5.7 Understanding the role that lack of opportunity to learn, lack of effective instruction, and assessment bias can play in the overrepresentation in special education of students with cultural, ethnic, gender and linguistic differences; and
- 5.8 Using academic, behavioral and health data to select and/or design interventions, and assist in the development of individualized education programs for students with disabilities.

¹⁰ **Assessment purposes** include but are not limited to screening, instructional planning, monitoring student progress, diagnostics, and program/curriculum evaluation.

¹¹ **Assessment types** may be created by the teacher or externally produced and include, but are not limited to, observation, functional behavior assessment, performance-based assessment of application of learning, or criterion referenced.

¹² **The hierarchy** of cognitive skills (Bloom's 1956 taxonomy of cognitive skills as revised by Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) includes the following lower order to higher order thinking skills:

- **Remembering:** Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
- **Understanding:** Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.
- **Applying:** Carrying out or using a procedure through executing or implementing.
- **Analyzing:** Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.
- **Evaluating:** Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
- **Creating:** Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing.

¹³ **Formative assessments** are designed and scored by an individual teacher or grade level or department team to assess student understanding of particular standards or objectives in order to inform instruction and guide teachers to adjust or differentiate instruction to meet the learner's needs. (Ainsworth, 2006)

¹⁴ **Summative assessments** identify the learner's achievement or progress made at a certain point in time against predetermined criteria.

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Domain 6. Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership:

Teachers maximize support for student learning by developing and demonstrating professionalism, collaboration with others, and leadership by:

- 6.1 Continually engaging in reflection, self-evaluation and professional development to enhance their understandings of content, pedagogical skills, resources and the impact of their actions on student learning;
- 6.2 Seeking professional development opportunities to enhance skills related to teaching and meeting the needs of [all students](#)¹⁵;
- 6.3 Collaborating with colleagues, administrators, students and their families to develop and sustain a positive school climate;
- 6.4 Collaborating with colleagues and administrators to examine student learning data, instructional strategies, curricula, and [organizational structures](#)¹⁶ to support continuous school and district improvement;
- 6.5 Guiding and coaching paraprofessionals and collaborating with colleagues, administrators, and special services staff to monitor the impact of instructional or behavioral support and interventions;
- 6.6 Proactively communicating in culturally respectful and sensitive ways with families in order to ensure their ongoing awareness of student progress and encourage opportunities to support their child's learning;
- 6.7 Understanding the legal rights of students with disabilities and their families within the intervention, referral, and individualized education plan process;
- 6.8 Understanding how one's race, gender and culture affect professional interactions with students, families and colleagues;
- 6.9 Using communication technology in a professional and ethical manner;
- 6.10 Collaborating with colleagues, administrators, and families in the development of individualized student success plans to address goal setting, personal and academic development, post secondary and career exploration, and/or capstone projects; and
- 6.11 Conducting themselves as professionals in accordance with the Connecticut's [Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators](#).

¹⁵ “All students” includes, but is not limited to, students with disabilities, English language learners, students with diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds and students with gifts and talents.

¹⁶ **Organizational structures** include, but are not limited to, grade level teams, departments, committees, learning communities, common collaboration or planning time, multidisciplinary teams, etc.

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Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators

(a) Preamble

The Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators is a set of principles which the education profession expects its members to honor and follow. These principles set forth, on behalf of the education profession and the public it serves, standards to guide conduct and the judicious appraisal of conduct in situations that have professional and ethical implications. The Code adheres to the fundamental belief that the student is the foremost reason for the existence of the profession.

The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professionalism. Therefore, the educator accepts both the public trust and the responsibilities to practice the profession according to the highest possible degree of ethical conduct and standards. Such responsibilities include the commitment to the students, the profession, the community and the family.

Consistent with applicable law, the Code of Professional Responsibility for Educators shall serve as a basis for decisions on issues pertaining to certification and employment. The code shall apply to all educators holding, applying or completing preparation for a certificate, authorization or permit or other credential from the State Board of Education. For the purposes of this section, "educator" includes superintendents, administrators, teachers, special services professionals, coaches, substitute teachers and paraprofessionals.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

(b) Responsibility to the student

- (1) The professional educator, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the student, shall:
 - (A) Recognize, respect and uphold the dignity and worth of students as individual human beings, and, therefore, deal justly and considerately with students;
 - (B) Engage students in the pursuit of truth, knowledge and wisdom and provide access to all points of view without deliberate distortion of content area matter;
 - (C) Nurture in students lifelong respect and compassion for themselves and other human beings regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, social class, disability, religion, or sexual orientation;
 - (D) Foster in students the full understanding, application and preservation of democratic principles and processes;
 - (E) Guide students to acquire the requisite skills and understanding for participatory citizenship and to realize their obligation to be worthy and contributing members of society;
 - (F) Assist students in the formulation of worthy, positive goals;
 - (G) Promote the right and freedom of students to learn, explore ideas, develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and necessary learning skills to acquire the knowledge needed to achieve their full potential;
 - (H) Remain steadfast in guaranteeing equal opportunity for quality education for all students;
 - (I) Maintain the confidentiality of information concerning students obtained in the proper course of the educational process, and dispense such information only when prescribed or directed by federal or state law or professional practice;
 - (J) Create an emotionally and physically safe and healthy learning environment for all students; and

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(K) Apply discipline promptly, impartially, appropriately and with compassion.

(c) Responsibility to the profession

(1) The professional educator, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession, shall:

- (A) Conduct himself or herself as a professional realizing that his or her actions reflect directly upon the status and substance of the profession;
- (B) Uphold the professional educator's right to serve effectively;
- (C) Uphold the principle of academic freedom;
- (D) Strive to exercise the highest level of professional judgment;
- (E) Engage in professional learning to promote and implement research-based best educational practices;
- (F) Assume responsibility for his or her professional development;
- (G) Encourage the participation of educators in the process of educational decision-making;
- (H) Promote the employment of only qualified and fully certificated, authorized or permitted educators;
- (I) Encourage promising, qualified and competent individuals to enter the profession;
- (J) Maintain the confidentiality of information concerning colleagues and dispense such information only when prescribed or directed by federal or state law or professional practice;
- (K) Honor professional contracts until fulfillment, release, or dissolution mutually agreed upon by all parties to contract;
- (L) Create a culture that encourages purposeful collaboration and dialogue among all stakeholders;
- (M) Promote and maintain ongoing communication among all stakeholders; and
- (N) Provide effective leadership to ensure continuous focus on student achievement.

(d) Responsibility to the community

(1) The professional educator, in full recognition of the public trust vested in the profession, shall:

- (A) Be cognizant of the influence of educators upon the community-at-large, obey local, state and national laws;
- (B) Encourage the community to exercise its responsibility to be involved in the formulation of educational policy;
- (C) Promote the principles and ideals of democratic citizenship; and
- (D) Endeavor to secure equal educational opportunities for all students.

(e) Responsibility to the student's family

(1) The professional educator in recognition of the public trust vested in the profession, shall:

- (A) Respect the dignity of each family, its culture, customs, and beliefs;
- (B) Promote, respond, and maintain appropriate communications with the family, staff and administration;
- (C) Consider the family's concerns and perspectives on issues involving its children; and
- (D) Encourage participation of the family in the educational process.

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UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT*

- (f) The professional educator, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the student, shall not:
 - (A) Abuse his or her position as a professional with students for private advantage;
 - (B) Discriminate against students.
 - (C) Sexually or physically harass or abuse students;
 - (D) Emotionally abuse students; or
 - (E) Engage in any misconduct which would put students at risk; and

- (g) The professional educator, in full recognition of his or her obligation to the profession, shall not:
 - (A) Obtain a certificate, authorization, permit or other credential issued by the state board of education or obtain employment by misrepresentation, forgery or fraud;
 - (B) Accept any gratuity, gift or favor that would impair or influence professional decisions or actions;
 - (C) Misrepresent his, her or another's professional qualifications or competencies;
 - (D) Sexually, physically or emotionally harass or abuse district employees;
 - (E) Misuse district funds and/or district property; or
 - (F) Engage in any misconduct which would impair his or her ability to serve effectively in the profession; and

- (h) The professional educator, in full recognition of the public trust vested in the profession, shall not:
 - (A) Exploit the educational institution for personal gain;
 - (B) Be convicted in a court of law of a crime involving moral turpitude or of any crime of such nature that violates such public trust; or
 - (C) Knowingly misrepresent facts or make false statements.

*Unprofessional conduct is not limited to the descriptors listed above. When in doubt regarding whether a specific course of action constitutes professional or unprofessional conduct please seek advice from your school district or preparation institution.

- (i) Code revision

This Code shall be reviewed for potential revision concurrently with the revision of the Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations, by the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards. As a part of such reviews, a process shall be established to receive input and comment from all interested parties.