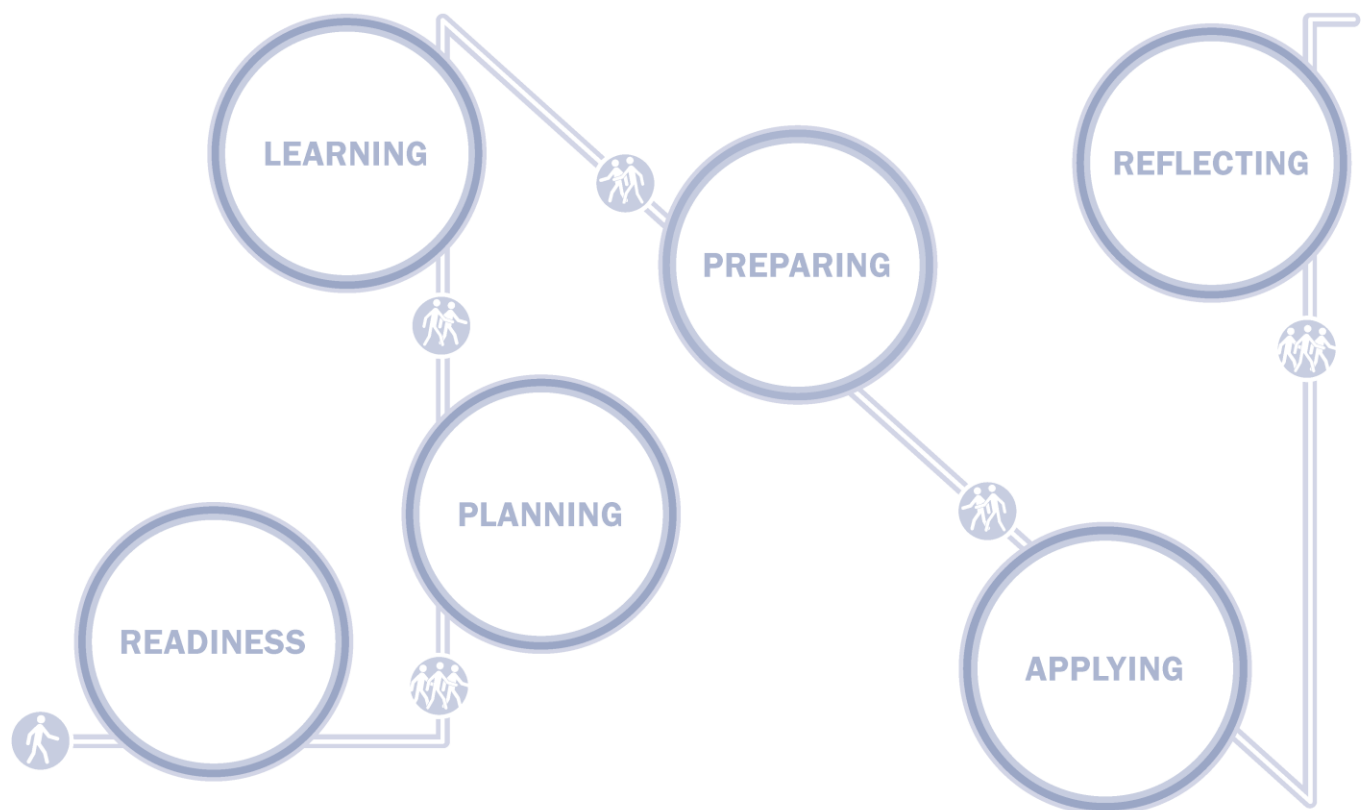


PROMOTING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Adult Education Teacher Competencies



Adult Education Teacher Competencies

Acknowledgments

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)—through a contract¹ with the American Institutes for Research and its partners World Education, Inc., and Drennon and Associates—created the Promoting Teacher Effectiveness in Adult Education Project to help improve the quality of adult education teachers in the United States. One goal of the project was to develop *Adult Education Teacher Competencies* that identify the knowledge and skills expected of any adult education teacher. The following authors contributed to the writing of the *Adult Education Teacher Competencies*:

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Background

A number of recent reports have emphasized the need for improved instruction for adult learners and improved preparation and professional development for adult education teachers. The National Research Council report issued in 2012, *Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Options and Research*, notes a number of challenges related to literacy instruction for adults, including one focused on adult literacy instructors. The report notes that “preparation of literacy instructors varies widely and professional development for them is limited” and recommends that “federal and state policy makers should ensure that professional development and technical assistance for instructors are available and consistent with the available research” to improve adult literacy instruction.

The Survey of Adult Skills—part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies—is an international survey that “measures cognitive and workplace skills [literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving in technological environments] needed for individuals to participate in society and... to prosper.” The survey found that the mean score for adults surveyed in the United States was 270, a score that was better than only 6 of the 22 countries surveyed.

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Title II, Adult Education and Literacy, of the recently enacted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014—the successor to the Workforce Investment Act—provides a partial response to the challenge of providing adults in the United States with the cognitive and workplace skills needed for success. It requires that each state develop a plan that stipulates its strategic vision, goals, and operational elements of its adult education program, including using funds to carry out state leadership activities and assess the quality of adult education providers. WIOA also encourages the establishment of a high-quality local education delivery system. When taken together, this body of research and legislation points to the need for a more cohesive approach to teacher professional learning designed to meet the demands of learners in a globally connected, digital world.

The *Adult Education Teacher Competencies* (the competencies) are one response to the challenges and needs identified in recent surveys of and reports on adult education. The competencies identify the knowledge and skills expected of any adult education teacher. They also offer a structured approach to determining the knowledge and skills that adult education teachers still need to develop and the professional development activities that will help them to acquire them. Although the competencies are focused on the skills needed to teach effectively across subject areas, teachers also need specific content knowledge and skills related to teaching in their particular field, such as English as a second language, mathematics, career or technical training, etc., in order to be effective. There are content area standards, such as those developed by the TESOL International Association,² that address specific content knowledge.

It is important to remember that adult education teachers are a diverse group who work in a variety of organizations (for example, school districts, community colleges, nonprofit organizations, correctional facilities, and religious institutions) that serve an equally diverse student population with many different learning needs and goals. Adult education programs have diverse education funding sources (e.g., state, federal), geographic contexts (e.g., urban, suburban, rural), and resources. Staffing can be very different as well. For example, some programs may have guidance counselors, test administrators, or full-time professional development staff; others may have only one full-time administrator or teacher who is either responsible for filling all those roles or for referring adult learners to those who might assist them with these tasks normally done by someone in those roles.

Depending on the institutional requirements, adult education teachers may or may not have a degree or a relevant educational background in the subject they teach. They also vary in terms of their job status (part-time, full-time), role (lead teacher, mentor, tutor), and experience (beginning teacher, experienced teacher).

Given these factors, any competencies for adult education teachers in the United States must be transferable across program contexts while also objectively reflecting the knowledge and skills the teachers need to promote student learning. By focusing on instruction and learning, the competencies are designed to support the essential role an adult education teacher plays in any context.

² <http://www.tesol.org/docs/books/standards-for-esl-efl-teachers-of-adults-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Development of the Adult Education Teacher Competencies

The *Adult Education Teacher Competencies* are part of the evidence-based *Adult Education Beginning Teacher Induction Toolkit* (<http://lincs.ed.gov/programs/teachereffectiveness>), which is designed to promote high-quality instruction that leads to student achievement. The competencies were developed in partnership with American Institutes for Research after an extensive review of the literature on teacher competencies and teacher effectiveness, a review by national subject matter experts, an extensive field test in adult education programs, and validation by a wide range of adult education stakeholders from across the country. Almost 2,000 stakeholders engaged in reviewing the competencies at workshops and focus groups at a number of education meetings and conferences, through online discussions, and other outreach efforts.

Organization of the *Adult Education Teacher Competencies*

The *Adult Education Teacher Competencies* are designed to identify the knowledge and skills needed by adult education teachers to improve student learning and performance. They are organized into broad areas of skills and knowledge (domains) and then into specific demonstrable and observable areas of performance (competencies). Each of the individual competencies is further detailed through a set of performance indicators with sample illustrations of teachers demonstrating that performance in a variety of adult education contexts. Each area is further defined below.

Domains	There are four domains that represent broad areas of activity for an adult education teacher: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Monitors and manages student learning and performance through data2. Plans and delivers high-quality, evidence-based instruction3. Effectively communicates to motivate and engage learners4. Pursues professionalism and continually builds knowledge and skills
Competencies	Within those 4 domains of activity, 17 individual, observable competencies represent the knowledge, skills, and abilities that an adult education instructor should possess to be effective within that domain. Each domain has four to five competencies.
Performance Indicators	Each competency has a set of indicators that articulate what the performance of this competency looks like in an adult education context.
Sample Illustrations	Each performance indicator is accompanied by a sample illustration that provides examples of the practice in different adult education settings (such as a multilevel English as a second language classroom, a basic literacy class for native English speakers, or an Adult Basic Education reading or mathematics class).

An online teacher self-assessment (<http://lincs.ed.gov/programs/teachereffectiveness>) tool has been developed to support use of the competencies. Beginning and experienced teachers can use the self-assessment to help identify priority areas for their own professional growth and learning. The self-assessment enables teachers to consider their own ability within each competency and consider the relevance of each competency to their teaching priorities and program priorities. They can then view and reflect on their own results and begin to develop professional learning priorities based on the results of the self-assessment.

Who Can Benefit From the *Adult Education Teacher Competencies*?

Beginning and experienced teachers, mentor teachers, instructional leaders, and professional developers all can use the competencies as a structured way of improving instructional practice and identifying professional learning needs to address gaps in skills and knowledge. The competencies provide a framework for what adult education teachers need to know and be able to do to be effective in the classroom and enhance student achievement.

Beginning Teachers	The competencies are designed to assist beginning teachers in becoming more effective at helping learners to achieve their goals. Beginning teachers experience a sharp learning curve as they discover how to navigate the demands of the classroom or the program during their first years of teaching. Some adult education teachers may have little prior preparation for their teaching position. However, even those who have had the benefit of a strong teacher preparation program may face a number of challenges for which they may not feel adequately prepared. In addition to teaching responsibilities, they may have to become familiar with program policies, create productive learning environments, plan lessons, plan for professional development, and assess student needs.
Experienced Teachers	Experienced teachers (those teaching in their subject for at least 5–7 years) can also benefit from the competencies. They can reflect on their own practice and engage in self-assessment, comparing their knowledge and skills with those outlined in the competencies. Teachers who received their initial teacher education or training several years ago may find that there is some new knowledge or new skills that they want to acquire through professional development. In addition, experienced teachers often become mentors to beginning teachers (or to teachers who are new to the program).
Mentor Teachers	Mentor teachers can use the competencies as a guide for helping beginning teachers who teach in the same field or subject to develop the required knowledge and skills. Together, a mentor teacher and beginning teacher can analyze and use data from classroom observations and feedback to guide instructional practice. They can identify the domains in which the teacher needs the most support and the types of support or professional development to be offered. The competencies can be used to guide coaching for beginning teachers and help improve a teacher's practice.
Administrators and Instructional Leaders	The competencies are designed to assist administrators and instructional leaders in guiding their program in the instructional improvement or induction process. Instructional leaders can use the competencies as a guide for classroom observation and also to identify both the specific and more general professional development needs of individual teachers or groups of teachers.
Professional Developers	The competencies can also be used to design and guide ongoing professional development that will improve teachers' abilities to address diverse students' learning needs by increasing teachers' content knowledge and teaching skills. They can also be used to develop a community of practice in which teachers share their expertise and learn together to expand their knowledge and teaching skills.

Conclusion

The *Adult Education Teacher Competencies* have been developed to serve adult education teachers as they navigate the shifting landscape of adult education and the continuously evolving needs of learners in our globally networked, technology-driven world. As the needs of learners change, so do the needs of teachers. Professional reflection, growth, and learning should be a permanent and positive part of that landscape. Ideally, the competencies and self-assessment will serve as tools for teachers to refine and improve their practice.

Domain

1. Monitors and manages student learning and performance through data

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
1.1. Assesses learners' prior knowledge, learning needs, and college and career readiness goals	1.1.1. Collects and reviews information on learners' content knowledge; prior learning experiences; and learning needs from school transcripts, questionnaires, and learner interviews	1.1.1. On the first day of class, the teacher of a multilevel English as a second language (ESL) class identifies learners' needs and proficiency levels by asking learners to do quickwrites to describe themselves. The students can use pictures, words, sentences, and/or paragraphs. These quickwrites, coupled with short student surveys about their learning backgrounds, are placed in student portfolios and will be used in future student-teacher interviews.
	1.1.2. Collects and updates information on learners' goals through interviews and/or questionnaires	1.1.2. An Adult Basic Education (ABE) literacy teacher administers learner self-assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. The literacy teacher also collects work samples (e.g., student writings, student-made dictionaries, and quizzes) and helps the learners organize the information into portfolios. The ABE literacy teacher uses these portfolios during progress conferences and with learners who are feeling frustrated with their progress.
	1.1.3. Reviews the results of program-created and required standardized assessments such as the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS), and other assessments	1.1.3. An Adult Secondary Education (ASE) bridge to college mathematics instructor supplements the results of the program's standardized mathematics assessment by developing an assessment that incorporates mathematics content from a high school equivalency (HSE) exam and also from a local college placement exam. By reviewing results from both exams, the instructor is able to identify learners who would benefit from a bridge to college mathematics course, show learners why they would benefit from the course, and guide decisions about content for the course.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
1.2. Sets learning goals and a course of study	1.2.1. Refers to assessments of students' learning needs and strengths, incoming content knowledge, and prior learning experiences to design courses of study and align learning goals	1.2.1. An ABE reading teacher finds that current learners, in their previous reading classes, answered basic comprehension questions from books written for adult emerging readers. With this information, the ABE reading teacher designs a series of activities that deepen learners' reading comprehension of slightly more challenging texts. The first activity asks learners to write letters to a character in the book, advising that character about how to solve a problem he or she is facing.
	1.2.2. Designs courses of study that link course content to learners' interests and goals and expose learners to new ideas and experiences that may help them to refine or change their goals over time	1.2.2. The teacher of a low-level ESL class supplies a diagram of possible student pathways upon completion of this class. Learners are asked to identify where they are in the diagram and where they would like to go. They then make similar diagrams of the school systems in their native countries and share the diagrams with the class.
	1.2.3. Supports students' continued learning and college and career goals by providing access to advisors and counselors or planning tools	1.2.3. The teacher of an intermediate ESL class invites a college and career counselor to visit the class. Before the visit, the teacher presents a lesson on types of questions that a college and career counselor might be able to answer. Each learner identifies three questions to ask. The teacher collects the questions, identifies the 10 most common questions, and supplies them ahead of time to the counselor so that the counselor can tailor her presentation. At the end of the presentation, the counselor sets up one-on-one appointments so learners can ask personal questions.
1.3. Monitors learning through summative and formative assessment data	1.3.1. Uses a variety of formative assessment tools (such as classroom observations, lesson closure discussions, portfolios, quizzes, and student error logs) to monitor learning and adjust instruction	1.3.1. At the end of each day's lesson, an ABE instructor asks learners to write individual responses to one or two brief prompts relating to that day's key lesson objectives. These answers provide the instructor with a snapshot of student understanding that the instructor combines with other formative assessments in planning for the next lesson.
	1.3.2. Provides regular, detailed feedback to learners on the progress of their learning	1.3.2. After 3 weeks of instruction, a bridge to college instructor holds a conference with each learner to review his or her attendance, class participation, organizational habits, and academic progress. The conferences provide each learner with an early opportunity to discuss areas of strength and concern.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	1.3.3. Uses required summative assessments to measure student progress toward learning goals over a specific instructional period and to make decisions about placement and goal-setting in a subsequent instructional period	1.3.3. A team of ESL instructors reviews the results and diagnostic information from the program’s standardized language skills assessment at the end of a cycle and uses a shared rubric to decide which students will advance to the next level. In addition to appropriately placing learners, the collaboration strengthens teachers’ abilities to evaluate student writing.
	1.3.4. Assists learners in reflecting on their own performance	1.3.4. At the beginning of a semester, an HSE teacher administers a learning goal assessment. At the end of an instructional unit, the HSE teacher administers a teacher-developed formative assessment. The HSE teacher shares the results with learners and works with them to tie the results to their learning goals (e.g., “I’ll be able to identify main ideas more easily by the end of the semester”), not just global skill improvements (e.g., “I’ll be a better reader”).
1.4. Adapts instruction based on formative and summative student assessment data	1.4.1. Uses formative assessment data to plan a range of supplemental activities for use with learners who struggle to achieve the lesson objectives or who would benefit from an extra challenge	1.4.1. An intermediate-level ESL teacher collects two writing samples—a personal story and a summary of a short newspaper article—from students in the first 3 weeks of class. The teacher analyzes the samples for learner strengths and weaknesses in idea development, grammar and usage, and vocabulary use. The teacher then plans a series of learning stations so that students can work independently, in small groups, or with the teacher to practice specific language skills.
	1.4.2. Uses diagnostic information from required summative assessments to adapt instruction to reach learners who have difficulty with a particular approach and to deepen learner understanding more generally	1.4.2. In an intermediate ABE classroom, the teacher, after reviewing a midterm standardized assessment, notes that two students are having similar difficulties in independently evaluating information about reading passages. The teacher finds a reading passage or text of interest to both of them and asks them to work together to analyze the reading passage and put it into a classification chart.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	<p>1.4.3. Uses student performance data to make judgments about when and how to diverge from a lesson plan in response to learning needs as they emerge</p>	<p>1.4.3. A bridge to college instructor is conducting a lesson on persuasive writing. Students are reading a text that includes data, presented in a graph, which appear to support the writer’s point of view. The instructor observes that the students are unable to discern how the scale of the graph affects the appearance of the data. The instructor decides to interrupt the lesson and asks students to use different scales to graph the same data. Through this impromptu work, students gain the ability to manipulate the appearance of a graph and to identify this manipulation in graphs created by others.</p>

Domain

2. Plans and delivers high-quality, evidence-based instruction

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
2.1. Designs learner-centered instruction and classroom environments	2.1.1. Presents content that connects to learners’ goals and interests and is applicable to their lives	2.1.1. Based on a needs assessment, an advanced ESL teacher finds that several learners in class want to work in health fields and a few other students were health workers in their home countries. The teacher integrates units on health themes with language learning activities. Learners practice oral communication skills by giving 5-minute presentations on health topics of their choice.
	2.1.2. Establishes a community of practice among learners to encourage peer-to-peer learning and a rapport with other students so that they feel encouraged to voice ideas and opinions without fear of negative consequences	2.1.2. An ABE literacy teacher works with learners to generate and agree on a set of norms for engaging in respectful classroom discussions. The instructor asks students to do a shared writing activity to print the norms on a poster board. The poster is displayed prominently in the classroom, which allows the teacher and learners to refer to the norms when needed.
	2.1.3. Encourages learner self-regulation and metacognition through a variety of skill-building activities to improve learning and overcome difficulties	2.1.3. A beginning ESL instructor teaches students the kind of language needed to analyze their own learning experiences and to share feedback (e.g., “I don’t like group work because...”) and express emotions about their own learning (e.g., “I am frustrated. I don’t know many words in English.”). Midway through the semester, the instructor shows the class a videotape of a role-play that the students did at the beginning of the semester. The instructor invites the class to share ideas in response to the prompt: “Before we _____, but now we _____.”

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	2.1.4. Provides multiple means and modalities for presenting and engaging learners with concepts, ideas, and materials	2.1.4. An ESL civics teacher plans a learning unit on the system of checks and balances in the three branches of the U.S. government. The teacher creates a flowchart to show the responsibilities and role of each branch. The teacher then assigns students to groups to research one of the branches, asking each group to provide guiding questions about the following: how many members the branch has, how the members of the branch are chosen to serve, the amount of time they serve, and the duties they undertake. The students are scheduled for time in the program’s computer lab to do Internet research and develop their presentations. Several days after the students make their presentations, the teacher creates a scenario so that each group of students can represent a branch of government to pass a law. The students are asked to create a classroom process for passing the law.
2.2. Designs standards-based instructional units and lesson plans	2.2.1. Focuses teaching and learning on a targeted set of standards that builds on their connections to one another	2.2.1. An ABE reading/writing teacher, preparing learners for an HSE exam, integrates a small cluster of standards in the unit, focused on analyzing the U.S. Founding Documents. To learn how to draw evidence from those texts to support a range of claims and conclusions, the teacher asks learners to write several short essays about the texts. They practice their computer skills when creating, refining, and sharing their writing. The teacher focuses classroom discussion on what the students have read or written.
	2.2.2. Outlines a clear and explicit standards-based purpose for the lesson, stated in terms of the desired student learning outcomes	2.2.2. An ASE bridge to college instructor ties a standards-based lesson on writing arguments to college readiness and, specifically, to an HSE exam. The teacher begins the lesson with a writing activity that prompts students to identify what they have just done and learned (e.g., “I have been working on...”; “I am able to...”). At the end of the lesson, the instructor reviews the purpose, summarizes student learning, and previews what students will be working on next (rather than previewing homework or textbook pages to be covered in subsequent lessons).

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	2.2.3. Designs a coherent sequence and progression of learning so that lessons build on one another, takes advantage of the connections among standards, and permits deep and thoughtful coverage	2.2.3. An ASE mathematics instructor organizes instruction so that students first learn the properties of operations for simple whole numbers and then extend their learning to fractions, operations with negative numbers, expressions with letters, and finally to polynomials. As the application of properties is extended during the course of the lessons, the teacher explicitly points out how the properties of operations work together to form the basis of algebra.
	2.2.4. Selects and uses resources and textbooks to align with the learning goals of the standards as a whole, as well as to individual standards	2.2.4. When training radiographers in screen film image processing, rather than moving through the textbook page by page the career technical instructor focuses the instruction on those pages in the textbook that address the learning standards. The instructor knows that understanding the concept of ratios, proportions, and functions will take substantial explicit instruction, problem-solving, and exercise, while other standards will require only a single lesson or two.
	2.2.5. Elicits direct, observable evidence of learners' abilities to independently demonstrate the targeted set of standards	2.2.5. Throughout a lesson, an ABE instructor checks in with students through a series of questions and answers to determine their understanding of a text under study. The instructor circulates around the room as students work on a writing assignment to make sure they understand the directions and to check on their progress in completing the assignment. Every 4 weeks, the instructor provides students with a culminating assignment. Through a combination of written comments, individual student conferences, and classroom discussions, the instructor provides prompt and accurate feedback on each student's progress in mastering the targeted standards.
2.3. Uses instructional techniques that are effective with adult learners	2.3.1. Engages students actively in their own learning through relevant, thought-provoking questions; problems; and tasks that stimulate interest	2.3.1. An ABE mathematics teacher gives learners tracing paper that they use to compare the angles formed when a transversal crosses a pair of parallel angles. After making comparisons, the learners share their observations and develop a general rule that will be true for all angles formed in these instances.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	2.3.2. Varies instructional activities and examples to improve conceptual understanding and skill development	2.3.2. An ASE teacher guides learners through a series of activities that emphasize different ways of engaging with a new text. Learners practice annotating the reading with questions and comments, defining new vocabulary, summarizing and paraphrasing, discussing the reading in groups, and presenting discussion points to the whole class.
	2.3.3. Addresses diverse learning modalities, abilities, needs, and interests through differentiated instruction	2.3.3. An ESL literacy teacher uses a common prompt—a picture of a car accident—to provide context for a variety of reading tasks. Low-beginning students match word cards with pictures and do word sorts to practice word recognition. More skilled beginning students copy words or work on reading comprehension questions. All learners dictate and share their own stories about car accidents they have experienced directly or witnessed. These stories will be used as texts for future reading lessons.
	2.3.4. Provides various opportunities for classroom interaction, where learners are grouped with others with a range of same-to-different needs, interests, and abilities, as well as opportunities for individual work, when appropriate	2.3.4. Learners in a multilevel ESL classroom are first grouped in like ability teams, where they engage in different activities (appropriate for their levels) to build vocabulary necessary in job interviews. Then, groups are changed to include individuals from different levels (mixed ability), where learners make lists of good interview behaviors and briefly practice them to ensure lower level students understand. Groups develop interview questions about certain professions and conduct mock interviews of individuals from other groups.
	2.3.5. Uses explicit instruction in instructional design to set a purpose for learning that is clear to the learner, breaks down content into smaller parts that follow a logical sequence, includes modeling, and provides immediate feedback to learners	2.3.5. An ABE writing teacher introduces peer review techniques by showing a short video of two learners engaged in a peer review session. The students and the teacher discuss the session: “What kinds of questions did the students ask each other? Do you think Student B will be able to write a better paper because of his classmate's input?” The teacher also asks, “Do you think showing your writing to your peers helps you? Why or why not?” The teacher then introduces language expressions and strategies used in peer review, and the learners practice in role-playing situations. The teacher observes the role-play, makes note of common challenges, and addresses those challenges in a subsequent lesson.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	2.3.6. Designs instruction within the course content that targets specific skills, such as active listening, note-taking, skimming and scanning, formal writing, effective communication, and study habits, to encourage learner development	2.3.6. Learners in a high-level ESL bridge to career course are given instruction on focused listening, where they are asked to identify specific information from a relatively long discourse or lecture while filtering out irrelevant information. Learners are asked to summarize the information as concisely as possible in an outline format that they learned in a previous lesson.
2.4. Designs instruction to build learners' technology and digital media literacy skills	2.4.1. Demonstrates the value of technology to stimulate learning, pique interest, and provide opportunities to apply ideas and concepts to learners' daily lives	2.4.1. An ASE bridge to business teacher shows learners how to create and interpret several types of data representation as part of social studies, science, and mathematics instruction. Once learners have shown that they can create data graphs accurately by hand, the teacher guides them to create these representations using electronic spreadsheets (such as Excel). The learners integrate these high-quality graphs into slide presentations, such as PowerPoint, for classroom demonstrations and presentations. Facility with these technological tools is very beneficial to these learners, who intend to enter business careers.
	2.4.2. Provides appropriate hands-on opportunities for learners to interact with computers, the Internet, and other digital media on a regular basis, from basic operations to more sophisticated ones in order to build technology literacy skills	2.4.2. An ABE literacy teacher teaches a multilevel class in which a few of the learners have not yet learned the basic mechanisms of using a mouse and navigating a computer environment. The teacher introduces the students to several online tools that provide hands-on practice with the mouse. The teacher gives more proficient learners a list of recommended literacy websites and asks them to find the websites on the Internet, describe the purpose of each site, and rate the site (1=not useful, 2=useful, 3=very useful). The class members share their reactions to the usefulness of the sites they visited.
	2.4.3. Provides tasks and projects within the course content that require technology for research, presentation, data management, and other skills	2.4.3. In an ASE advanced writing course, the teacher provides the topic of "Good and Bad Dieting," with specific instruction on how to research information using search engines on the Internet. Learners are asked to use the information they find to complete mind maps and then organize the information into three main categories, which will be used in a later lesson on essay writing.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	2.4.4. Teaches critical analysis and evaluation strategies of Web-based information and digital media, including an understanding of authenticity, agenda, purpose, and point of view	2.4.4. A teacher of a multilevel ESL class divides the class into four mixed ability groups. The teacher chooses a current news topic and then asks the learners to visit three news outlets (e.g., a local news site, an international news site, and an ethnic media site) in whatever language the learners choose to read. The teacher asks the learners to work together to find and compare the kinds of information found at each site on the topic, using the following questions: “What article(s) did you find on this topic? What are the headlines? Are the articles on the home page? What information do you find? What photos do you see? What is different across the sites? What is similar? Why do you think there are differences and similarities?”
2.5. Designs instruction to build learners’ higher-order thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills	2.5.1. Provides activities that require suspending judgment, coming to consensus, discussing alternatives, prioritizing, negotiating, problem-solving, evaluating, and other skills	2.5.1. After high-level ABE learners independently read the beginning of an article rating the best places to live in the United States, the teacher leads a discussion about what learners believe are the characteristics of a good city (e.g., safety, entertainment, size, commerce, and other criteria). Then, in groups, learners are asked to decide by consensus which characteristics they deem most important and to rank them. Finally, learners are asked to read the rest of the article and report if they agree with the author’s conclusions, based on their groups’ priorities.
	2.5.2. Provides opportunities for inquiry and for learners to construct meaning and develop ideas from open-ended questions	2.5.2. Learners in an intermediate ASE class are interested in working in food services. The teacher develops a science unit, constructing research questions associated with the leavening properties of different ingredients such as yeast, baking powder, and baking soda. The teacher creates open-ended research questions that provide guidelines for inquiry, including the following: “What are common leavening agents in food preparation? In what types of recipes and in what combinations are those agents used and why?” The teacher concludes the lesson by having students work in groups to develop recipes that include those agents and try the recipes at home. Learners share the results of their experiments.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	<p>2.5.3. Provides learners opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills, and new learning to identify obstacles and solutions to real-life and classroom projects through independent and collaborative problem-solving activities</p>	<p>2.5.3. A bridge to manufacturing teacher presents learners with a design problem within a unit on measurement. The learners are given a certain number of wall sections of a certain height and width so that they can create a variety of rectangular, prism-shaped toolshed designs. Learners sketch the possibilities and determine the measurements that will maximize the floor area and capacity of the shed. After the students submit their designs, the class members move to the program’s computer lab, where they search common shed fabrication designs and are given the opportunity to revise their original designs.</p>

Domain

3. Effectively communicates to motivate and engage learners

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
3.1. Communicates high expectations of learners and motivates them to persist to meet their goals	3.1.1. Communicates learning goals and explains to learners in clear language how day-to-day instruction, assignments, and projects support them in achieving those goals	3.1.1. An advanced ESL teacher begins each class with a review of the day's agenda, including the learning objectives for the day's lesson. At the end of each lesson, the teacher reviews what the intended objectives for the lesson were and what was actually accomplished. The teacher also indicates what will be covered in the next class.
	3.1.2. Encourages learners to ask questions and seek out help when they are experiencing difficulty	3.1.2. An ASE teacher demonstrates through daily interactions with learners that trying out ideas, being uncertain, and struggling are a normal part of the learning process. Rather than extending praise only to "correct" answers and showing embarrassment or disappointment in response to learner mistakes, the teacher gives praise for effort and resilience and emphasizes how much can be learned from both errors and correct responses.
	3.1.3. Builds learner confidence by providing feedback on progress in relationship to learning goals and encouragement and clear feedback about the steps needed to continue moving toward goal attainment	3.1.3. A literacy-level ABE teacher schedules one-on-one meetings with students to discuss progress in relationship to their learning goals (while other students are engaged in small group collaborative work). In one of these meetings, a learner who had come to the program with the goal of obtaining a high school credential expresses his frustration with his perceived level of progress. The teacher acknowledges that a high school credential is a long-term goal and describes the short-term and midterm goals that were established earlier in the semester to reach that longer term goal. The teacher then reviews the current progress the learner is making in relationship to immediate goals for the semester.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
3.2. Communicates in a clear and understandable way	3.2.1. Speaks and writes clearly and accurately when giving directions for tasks, clarifying content, questioning, and evaluating student work and ideas	3.2.1. A teacher of a multilevel ESL class is spending a lot of time going around the classroom re-explaining task instructions. After listening to an audiotape of himself giving instructions, the teacher decides to practice scripting the instructions for a few days. The teacher sets reminders to repeat instructions in different ways. First, he explains orally and demonstrates with gestures. Next, he models what the learners should do. Finally, he asks the learners to practice as a whole class before working on the task individually or in small groups.
	3.2.2. Uses language and notation that is appropriate for learners, based on their backgrounds and abilities	3.2.2. A team of ABE teachers organizes a “library” of books according to reading levels. The teachers then use the levels to recommend books for learners’ independent reading. As learners read, the teachers monitor and question them to determine whether the chosen books are appropriately challenging.
	3.2.3. Selects level-appropriate materials and presents them in an understandable and organized format to support the goals of the lesson	3.2.3. A high-level ABE teacher selects news articles as part of a lesson on statewide elections. In order to support students in reading to identify the main ideas of an article, the teacher creates a graphic organizer to accompany the article and, after having students read the article independently, creates mixed ability groups so that students can complete the graphic organizer with the main ideas.
3.3. Engages in active listening, dialogue, and questioning to facilitate and support learning	3.3.1. Uses questioning strategies for understanding and responding to student comments and questions in order to engage learners in inquiry, challenging their own assumptions, and problem-solving	3.3.1. Learners in an intermediate ASE course are asked to answer the following questions about knowing how to calculate the circumference of a circle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do you measure the circumference of a circle? ▪ Why do we need to know this? ▪ What professions might need this information (fashion designers, landscapers, manufactures, carpet layers, and so forth)? ▪ How can you use this information? ▪ Can you think of an easy way to remember the formula?

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	3.3.2. Builds stop, reflect, and check-in points in lesson plans to provide learners with opportunities to clarify, confirm, or deepen their understanding of the lesson task or content	3.3.2. During the course of every lesson, a bridge to college teacher employs several questioning strategies to help students fully understand the lesson objectives. Rather than relying on an individual student response to represent class-wide understanding, the teacher creates a classroom culture where all learners listen to, critique, and speak in support of other learners' ideas. The teacher also routinely presses learners not to simply provide "answers" to problems or questions but to always explain and justify their process and thinking.
3.4. Models an understanding of diversity	3.4.1. Uses diversity of learners' home languages, cultures (ethnic, racial, sexual, religious, class based) and prior language/literacy learning experiences as a resource for learning and building a classroom	3.4.1. An ABE literacy teacher invites learners to create a class calendar of different holidays and festivals celebrated by learners in the class. The teacher uses the calendar to reinforce the spelling of days of the week and months of the year. In addition, the class votes for those holidays they will celebrate in class. The teacher invites learners to share cultural practices they'd like others to know about. For example, learners of Muslim faith may fast during Ramadan and may refuse food at break time.
	3.4.2. When evaluating learner performance, tailors feedback based on an understanding of linguistic, cultural, and ability differences, such as when learners are members of vernacular-speaking communities, are second language learners, or possibly have learning difficulties	3.4.2. An intermediate ESL teacher identifies common errors made by native speakers of Spanish, such as using adjectives after nouns as is common in Spanish instead of before nouns as is common in English. The teacher shows learners how English and Spanish are different in this area, demonstrating an understanding of the differences.
	3.4.3. Uses language and chooses classroom material that respect learners' identities as individuals	3.4.3. A teacher reviews mathematics texts, looking for problems that can be used in an ASE mathematics class. The teacher discovers a few problems that are mathematically rich but that contain gender and other cultural stereotypes. The teacher recognizes that the problems, as written, would offend some learners, would create a classroom atmosphere that undermined trust, and would distract from the content of the lesson. The teacher rewrites the problems to remove those references.

Domain

4. Pursues professionalism and continually builds knowledge and skills

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
4.1. Possesses content area knowledge and teaching skills required for subjects and populations taught	4.1.1. Demonstrates knowledge of subjects and populations taught through the development of lesson plans, activities, and a selection of resources that have evidence of effectiveness and are aligned with instructional goals and standards	4.1.1. An intermediate ASE teacher is planning a learning unit on writing instruction. The teacher structures the unit to include lessons on each of the phases of the writing process: prewriting, writing, revising, and editing. Through review of writing samples, the teacher identifies common areas of need among students and identifies paragraph development as an area for explicit instruction.
	4.1.2. Builds knowledge and skills both in content areas and pedagogy through formal education, preservice learning, job-embedded learning, or participation in professional development activities	4.1.2. An ESL teacher will be assigned a multilevel class in the next semester. The teacher’s knowledge of teaching adult English language learners was gained through completion of a Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages certificate program, but the program did not include methods for instruction in a multilevel setting. The teacher seeks resources for building knowledge and preparing for teaching the class by working with an experienced teacher in his program and by enrolling in a freely available online course.
	4.1.3. Evaluates areas where one’s own pedagogical and/or content knowledge needs to be strengthened and seeks out professional development settings and resources to address these needs as part of a professional development plan	4.1.3. An ASE teacher who has always focused reading instruction on fiction and autobiography learns that graduates often struggle to read nonfiction texts in college. The teacher finds and enrolls in a professional development seminar series devoted to high-quality instruction of nonfiction texts. Following the seminars, the teacher plans to read a series of research articles on this issue as further preparation before planning a nonfiction unit for students.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	4.1.4. Connects professional learning to instructional practice by implementing what has been learned, evaluating the impacts, and refining practice going forward	4.1.4. An ABE mathematics teacher wants to improve learners' conceptual understanding of the differences in measuring length, area, and volume. The teacher attends professional development workshops that describe the importance of using concrete manipulatives in developing these concepts. After using these tools in the classroom, the teacher believes that the learners have a clearer notion of measurement concepts but wants to do a better job of linking the manipulatives to learners' understanding of measurement units. The teacher plans adjustments to address this weakness in the next cycle.
4.2. Participates in professional development networks and learning communities	4.2.1. Participates regularly in a professional learning network or community of practice, with the express purpose of improving teaching and learning	4.2.1. An intermediate ESL teacher's second language reading pedagogy relies largely on experience teaching high school English literature. The teacher decides to join a study circle with other local ESL teachers to improve her knowledge base and strengthen her practice as an ESL reading teacher. The teacher is able to make adjustments to instructional practice, with improved focus on alphabetics, reading fluency, and vocabulary development.
	4.2.2. Shares content and pedagogical resources with program staff in collaborative professional development projects	4.2.2. A team of ASE teachers decide they want to improve their science instruction. They read and discuss a series of articles on climate change and work together to develop questions that are focused on critique and evaluation of the information presented, and they devise activities and experiments that will be appropriate at an ASE level. After teaching the lessons, the group reconvenes to share observations of student learning and revise the lessons for later use.
	4.2.3. Participates in the development and implementation of a shared vision among members of a professional network or learning community, with the intent of creating new and improved conditions for teachers and learners	4.2.3. An intermediate ASE teacher, while participating in a teachers' meeting about the institution's goals and vision, realizes that there is a great deal of emphasis on obtaining a high school diploma, but little emphasis is directed toward passing the high school credential test. The teacher decides to write for the institution blog in order to raise awareness. She submits an article on the diversity of learner needs and how preparation courses can be useful for some learners who have differing needs from the learners who will receive high school diplomas.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	4.2.4. Shares, gives, and accepts feedback related to student learning through professional networks and learning communities	4.2.4. A group of ABE and ASE teachers agree to engage in a semester-long project focused on improving the amount and quality of “learner talk” in their classes. The teachers devise an observation protocol that they use while observing each other’s classes to record questions and directions that seem to encourage or stifle productive learner discourse. Over time, the teachers begin to adjust their teaching practices in response to patterns they notice through the project.
4.3. Refines instructional practices through reflection on experience, evidence, and data	4.3.1. Identifies the phases involved in the reflective teaching process and articulates the link between engaging in the process and student learning outcomes	4.3.1. An ABE literacy teacher is concerned about nonparticipation patterns during phonics activities among a few learners. The teacher starts a teaching journal to focus attention on the learners’ behaviors and her own reactions. At a teachers’ meeting, the teacher shares her reflective process and observations, and when colleagues acknowledge similar concerns, the teacher and colleagues decide to undertake a collaborative journal writing project. Over time, the teachers are able to broaden their views on the challenges of nonparticipation, question their assumptions about classroom expectations, and devise a plan for talking to the learners about their own expectations for classroom participation.
	4.3.2. Understands the nature and purpose of teacher reflection tools (e.g., teaching journal/diary, self-observation, action research) and uses these tools in response to the local teaching context	4.3.2. A multilevel ESL teacher is concerned that all learners are not being reached and that the lower level learners are falling behind because the teacher hasn’t been able to give them enough time. The teacher teams up with a colleague to investigate how to improve the outcomes of these learners. The two teachers discuss the issue, and the teacher’s partner observes him and scripts what is observed, avoiding opinions. The teacher does the same observation and scripts for his partner, and they meet in conference to discuss their findings.

Competencies	Performance Indicators	Sample Illustrations
	4.3.3. Regularly seeks out opportunities to tap into current professional wisdom, empirical research, and theory as a vehicle for reflecting on and improving one’s own teaching	4.3.3. An intermediate ASE teacher hears someone mention evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) in a meeting but is not familiar with this teaching approach. The teacher searches for articles that describe the approach and research papers that might describe its effectiveness. She is more interested in the approach after consulting these sources but also recognizes how different EBRI is from her current practice. She decides to sign up for an online professional development course on EBRI before trying to employ this in the classroom.
4.4. Participates in and contributes to program improvement efforts	4.4.1. Routinely shares instructional plans, data, and reflections on learner progress with other program staff members	4.4.1. Midway through the semester, an advanced ESL teacher meets with colleagues to discuss learners’ oral skill development. The teacher wants to know how to improve oral skill instruction to better prepare learners for the speaking demands of credit ESL classes. The teacher brings sample lesson plans, a list of curricular objectives, and video clips of learners working in groups and giving individual speeches.
	4.4.2. Identifies patterns in learner achievement to suggest program-wide changes in course structure, content, pedagogy, or professional development	4.4.2. An ASE bridge to college teacher notices that learners routinely arrive in class needing a great deal of work in writing and mathematics. These areas are the ones that the high school credential test-takers frequently fail. The teacher begins a program-wide discussion of possible responses to this problem. The program’s leadership, with additional input from teachers, decides that teachers will no longer teach all subjects that are tested. Instead, teachers will specialize in one or two content areas. In this way, teachers will be able to focus their energy and professional development activities on a narrower range of content that particularly interests them.
	4.4.3. Identifies patterns in learners’ academic and career goals to suggest program-wide changes in advising and contextualized instruction and to encourage collaboration with higher education, industry, and other institutions	4.4.3. An intermediate ESL teacher sees that after completing his class, learners are not completing the next advanced ESL classes or ABE classes. The teacher believes that these learners are not comfortable moving to new classes that demand more academic rigor. The teacher suggests to the head of the ESL department that they create a transition course that will prepare learners for career and academic success. The pilot course is accepted, and the teacher is chosen to teach it.