THINKING BEHIND RUBRICS
2011-12

To help you apply the rubrics, the following describes some of the thinking behind the rubrics as they were being developed. The selection of a rubric level is based on a preponderance of evidence matching a rubric level description for that score point. The description requires professional judgment to apply to the evidence; it is not in the form of an item whose presence or absence is readily apparent to noneducators, and perhaps even to nonspecialists.

This document discusses each rubric in two sections: 1) Big ideas and their progression across rubrics and 2) Level differences that describe key differences between adjacent rubric levels.

Planning Rubrics

Many candidates use plans and materials developed by others – textbook writers, curriculum developers, the cooperating teacher, educators posting materials on the Internet, etc. This reflects teaching as a collaborative enterprise, which is desirable, especially for novices. However, it complicates scoring in determining to what extent the content and structure of the plans, instructional materials, and assessments reflect the candidate's own knowledge and skills. Therefore, for this task, the plans and other materials must be judged in light of the candidate's explanations of how the instructional and assessment materials work. Scorers should rely heavily on these explanations and not make big inferences from their knowledge of the curriculum intent or knowledge of how the curriculum might be optimally implemented. For example, if the mathematics curriculum is designed to develop students' conceptual understanding, but the candidate talks consistently in procedural terms, the candidate is probably attending only to procedural fluency. Candidates are prompted for explanations in the commentary but sometimes provide them in other parts of the Teaching Event, e.g., in the Instruction commentary or daily reflections.

1 Establishing a balanced instructional focus

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- One vs. multi-dimensional central focus – Learning segments are defined by a central instructional focus. To have a central focus, the standards/objectives, learning tasks, and assessments are related to an identifiable theme, essential question, or topic within the curriculum. Across the rubric, this idea progresses from no discernable central focus or a one-dimensional focus at Level 1 to a multi-dimensional focus at Levels 3 and 4. ("Dimensions" are explained in the next bullet.)
- Connections between different types of knowledge in the content area – In every content area, the different types of knowledge constitute dimensions of the curriculum. These include more basic types of knowledge (e.g., facts, skills, conventions) and higher order knowledge or thinking skills (such as strategies for interpreting or reasoning from facts or evidence, synthesizing ideas, strategies for

evaluating work). Examples that define some subject-specific dimensions are specified in the rubric for each content area. Connections between the different types of knowledge are emphasized, since any one type in isolation provides a limited view of content understandings. Across the rubrics, this idea progresses from a uni-dimensional focus on one type of knowledge to the exclusion of other types to a design where the types of knowledge are not only present but consistently connected.

- Progression of learning tasks – A progression of learning and assessment tasks is where the tasks are structured and sequenced to build and check student understanding of the central focus. The progression may be linear, with each lesson providing prerequisite knowledge or skills for the next, or nonlinear, with each lesson's learning task contributing a different perspective on the central focus and together building deeper student understanding.
- Deep understandings of the central focus – Understandings that go beyond the superficial. This must be considered in light of the developmental level of the students, the short length of the learning segment, and whether the focus is being introduced to students or whether they have worked on it previously.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: There are two ways **to achieve a Level 1 rating**: (1) The first is to lack any identifiable focus for the learning segment (e.g., a lack of even a general connection among the standards/ objectives, learning tasks, and assessments). **In all levels beyond Level 1**, the learning segment has a central focus. (2) The second way is through a learning segment that is defined by a number of lessons rather than a central focus and therefore contains one or more lessons that do not contribute to the central focus identified by the candidate.

  Elementary Literacy Only: In Elementary Literacy, a lack of focus can also be achieved through a learning segment that is centered on integrated instruction, but which does not focus on *literacy* learning. These learning segments typically focus on the application of previously learned reading and writing skills/strategies in the context of the content area, but lack instruction that is directed at moving the students beyond their current levels of literacy skill or understanding. For integrated instruction to be rated higher than a 1 on this rubric, it must include an explicit focus on literacy skills/strategies, such as general literacy skills/strategies applied to subject-specific text(s) or specific characteristics of a text type to comprehend or compose subject-specific text. If the skills/strategies are not new to the students, the focus should be on developing a deeper understanding or mastery of them or on an application in a different text type.

  If there is a central focus, the contrast between Levels 1 and 2 is in the dimensionality of the focus. **At Level 1**, the standards/objectives, learning tasks and assessments focus exclusively on one type of knowledge to the exclusion of any others. **At Level 2**, one type of knowledge is very dominant, with only superficial, fleeting, or inconsistent attention given to other types of knowledge.

- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, there are clear connections between the various types of knowledge. "Clear" means that the connections go beyond the superficial. This is true for either the instructional tasks or the assessment tasks, but not both. One type of knowledge may be prominent, as it is the major focus of the learning objectives (i.e., the idea is not an equal balance between types). In that case, other types of knowledge will be used to either give meaning to or strengthen understanding of the prominent type. Another characteristic of **Level 3** is that the daily set of standards/objectives, learning tasks, and assessments work together to build a progressive understanding of the content. This progression can either be linear, where each lesson builds on the previous one, or nonlinear, where a concept, phenomenon, etc. is examined from multiple perspectives to build a more holistic and/or nuanced understanding.
- Between 3 and 4: **At Level 4**, the connections happen for both the learning tasks *and* the assessment tasks. In addition, the progression provides students opportunities to deepen their understanding of the central focus of the learning segment.

2 Making Content Accessible

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Relationship of students' experiential backgrounds, interests, or prior learning to the standards/objectives – This progresses from little or no relationship at Level 1 to strategic use of particular aspects of students' experiential backgrounds or interests as well as prior learning to help students reach the standards/objectives at Levels 3 and 4.
- Forms of student support – These include any strategy aimed at helping students who need additional support to understand the content and/or learn the skills inherent in the standards/objectives. A few examples of such strategies are listed in a footnote for the rubric. This idea progresses from general support for usually struggling students at Level 2 to strategies that work well together to address varied student learning needs at Level 4.
- Access to grade-level literacy standards/objectives – This appears at Levels 3 and 4. This means that the teacher is delivering the grade-level curriculum outlined in the student content standards. This does not mean that students whose skills are far below grade level should be taught material that is beyond their abilities to comprehend or produce. However, the curriculum is not "dumbed down" for these students; addressing critical prerequisite knowledge and skills does not eliminate a focus on more complex knowledge and skills. For example, students who cannot write an essay independently can complete a graphic organizer that helps them organize sentences communicating their ideas into thematic paragraphs within an essay format.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: If there are significant errors in the content being taught, this rubric is scored **at Level 1**. An alternative characteristic of **Level 1** is that aspects of the students' experiential backgrounds, interests, or prior learning are reflected in the

plans and have a superficial relationship with the standards/objectives, so the connections aren't very useful in helping students learn the content. In contrast, **at level 2**, this relationship is used in the plan to help move students toward meeting the learning objectives. **At Level 2**, any errors present do not significantly disadvantage students in future learning. In addition, there is at least one general strategy for addressing the needs of students who often have difficulty, e.g., the candidate plans to circulate while students are working and help those who are struggling.

- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, the plans not only draw on students' prior learning, but they also draw on students' experiences or interests to help them meet standards and reach the learning objectives appropriate for their grade level. These candidates *structure* support strategies to help students gain access to the grade-level curriculum. Meaning, students do not merely list supports, but rather identify *how* supports will assist students. For example, if heterogeneous grouping is planned, there is a process to ensure that students do not just copy the work of others but actively engage in developing their own understanding.
- Between 3 and 4: **At level 4**, the candidate's plans and commentary suggest an understanding of how to meet varied student needs in a classroom. This is not limited to English learners or special needs students, although these students have specific needs that often require differentiation or strategic teaching decisions. The candidate may identify other types of student needs that are being considered during planning, e.g., students who are reluctant to participate in discussions, students who already know the content or who learn it more quickly than other students. There are two approaches to accommodating particular student needs: 1) differentiating instruction, where different instruction is planned to address the needs; and 2) strategic teaching decisions, where instruction is planned that simultaneously addresses multiple needs, perhaps with scaffolding or additional support for students who need it. The candidate need not be meeting *every* student's learning needs, but there should be evidence that there are reasonable strategies for meeting both the needs of students as a class and a variety of distinct needs of individuals or subgroups.

3 Designing assessments

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Match of standards/objectives, and assessments – This refers to a match between the standards/objectives being assessed and the assessment instruments. It progresses from a mismatch or a limited match between instruction and the learning actually assessed at level 1 to a match at increasingly complex levels from Levels 2 to Levels 3/4. (Remember that candidates were asked to indicate when they were only focusing on part of a standard, so they should be held accountable only for that part, and not the entire standard.)
- Type of student understandings measured by assessments – This idea refers to the complexity of the understandings or skills measured. The assessments move from the ability to measure at most surface-level student understanding at level 2 to the ability to measure some depth of student understanding at Levels 3 and 4.

- Productive/receptive modalities – Productive modalities are how students communicate their own understanding, while receptive modalities are how students understand communication by others. For example, to assess student understanding of a cause/effect argument, constructing an original speech or essay would assess students' productive understandings while critiquing another's speech or essay would assess their receptive understandings.
- Accommodation of special student needs – This would include any effort to address the needs of a student who otherwise would not be able to demonstrate the relevant knowledge, skills, and understandings on the assessment instrument(s). This could include scaffolding of student work or responses or changes in the method of administration, the format of the assessment, the method of responding to the assessment, or the learning objectives (if reflected in an IEP).

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: A significant mismatch between one or more assessments and the content and skills inherent in the learning tasks described in the plans results in **a Level 1 score**. At least one assessment requires knowledge and skills which go *far* beyond those described in the context commentary or taught during the learning segment. The mismatch should be major and should not be confused with reasonable extensions of learning. An alternative way of receiving **a Level 1 score** is that at least one of the assessments does not match the learning objectives identified as being assessed. The candidate may assert that the assessment measures a particular learning objective, e.g., conceptual understanding, but you cannot figure out how. Again, the mismatch should be significant. **At level 2**, the standards/objectives, instruction, and assessments match. However, this match is only clear at a surface-level of understanding.
- Between 2 and 3: **At level 3**, the assessments clearly allow students to display their understanding or skill in some depth relative to the students' developmental level, the short length of the learning segment, and the amount of time students have been working on the particular concept, skill, or understanding as described in the standards/objectives. In addition, both students' ability to communicate their own understandings and skills (productive modalities, e.g., writing, speaking, drawing/graphing) and their understanding of content communicated by others (receptive modalities, e.g., reading, listening, viewing) are assessed.
- Between 3 and 4: **At level 4**, assessments reflect a deliberate design, changes in the assessment instrument or method of administration, or options offered to address the special needs of one or more students who otherwise would be limited in the ability to demonstrate the expected understandings and skills.

Instruction Rubrics

This task provides the only opportunity in the Teaching Event to see the candidate interacting with students. The video clip(s) illustrate how the candidate implements some of the strategies described throughout the Teaching Event and works with students to move them toward meeting standards/objectives. The commentary serves mainly to

provide context for understanding the events seen in the clip(s) and for the candidate to point out and explain specific strategies to meet student needs. Information provided in the commentary that does not help the scorer understand and interpret the teaching and learning in the video clip(s) should be given little weight.

4 Engaging students in learning

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Student opportunities to engage in developing their own understandings – There is a difference between *participation* in learning tasks, i.e., following instructions to complete the activity, vs. intellectual *engagement* with the learning tasks, i.e., actively working with the content throughout the activity so that new or deeper learning occurs. The emphasis is on *opportunities* to engage with the content, recognizing that some students may resist engagement. The opportunities vary from limited at Level 1 to opportunities that reflect some explicit tailoring to the students at Level 4.
- Focus of clip(s) – In every content area, the focus of the clip(s) is specified. If the clip(s) submitted do not reflect the appropriate focus, this Guiding Question is scored at Level 1.
- Safety issues – This occurs only for Science, Agriculture (Science Emphasis), and Agricultural Technology/Design. Classes in these disciplines often include use of complex machinery or dangerous substances which pose safety risks. This ranges from immediate safety risks to students in Level 1 to no evident safety concerns in Levels 3 and 4.
- Problematic classroom management that interferes with learning – At Level 1, this is a classroom environment where disruptions or a lack of structure consistently make it very difficult for any student to engage with the content or where the candidate shows so little respect for students and their ideas that the classroom climate is not conducive to student learning.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: **At Level 1**, the students are following instructions and completing the activity, but there is something that limits students' opportunities to develop their own understanding of the required focus of the video clip. This may be due to the content of the questions asked by the teacher or the nature of the activity that the students are asked to do. The teacher may only be interacting with a few of the students without attempting to engage the others. Level 1 also includes candidates whose classrooms are so disruptive or disrespectful of students and their ideas that the environment consistently interferes with student learning, as well as candidates whose video clip(s) do not reflect the required focus. For Science, Agriculture (Science Emphasis), and Agricultural Technology/Design, if immediate safety risks (e.g., students not wearing goggles when using dangerous chemicals) are apparent, then a Level 1 rating is assigned no matter how good the instruction. **At Level 2**, the strategies offer students opportunities to *engage* with the content relative to the required focus of the clip(s). Not all students may be actually doing so, but teacher attempts to engage students in the learning task (not just participate) can be identified within the clip(s). For Science, Agriculture (Science Emphasis), and Agricultural

Technology/Design, some minor safety concerns may be apparent, e.g., a candidate allowed students to taste safe acids and bases to help them understand different characteristics establishing an unsafe precedent of tasting unknown liquids in a laboratory setting.

- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, the strategies are structured to engage students intellectually in the learning task(s) and incorporate some attention to students as individuals, i.e., who the students are, their language needs, or other specific learning needs. These strategies may be weakly implemented and/or not explicitly identified by the candidate as intentional. For Science, Agriculture (Science Emphasis), and Agricultural Technology/Design, no safety concerns are apparent.
- Between 3 and 4: In addition, **at Level 4**, candidates need to explicitly identify strategies for intellectual engagement, either in the Instruction commentary or earlier in the Planning Task. The strategies should be clearly recognizable in the video clip(s).

5 Monitoring student learning during instruction

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Strategies for monitoring student understanding – Candidates are monitoring student learning at all rubric levels. The candidate's monitoring becomes increasingly sophisticated, with the focus of monitoring deepening until at level 4, they are monitoring, in part, by soliciting explanations of student thinking.
- Candidate responses – This varies from candidate responses that aren't effective at moving student understandings forward at Level 1 to responses at Levels 3 and 4 that build on what students are saying or doing to deepen student understanding of the content and/or thinking processes being taught.
- Significant content inaccuracies – This only appears at Level 1. (If the content is inaccurate, it doesn't matter how it is taught.) Significance is defined in terms of impact on student learning. A significant inaccuracy negatively affects student learning during the instruction viewed on the videotape. Candidates should not be penalized for misspeaking or making minor content errors. The error(s) should be significant enough that the students are going to be disadvantaged when they encounter the same content or apply the same skills again. An example of a significant inaccuracy is defining density or metaphor incorrectly and consistently reflecting this error in the materials and activities seen on the clip.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: Candidates displaying one or more inaccuracies that negatively impact student learning are scored **at Level 1**. Alternatively, candidates who primarily monitor student learning by asking yes/no or other types of simple questions (either orally or through written materials) that don't require much thinking on the part of students (i.e., surface-level questions) are also scored **at Level 1**. In contrast, candidates **at Level 2** are requiring students to think to respond during the activities shown in the video clip(s). This student thinking is grounded in knowledge of facts, skills, conventions, etc., and is not just providing unsupported opinions.

Moreover, candidates **at Level 2** respond to students in ways that are "reasonable" attempts to improve student understanding. Reasonable means that candidates are attempting to apply instructional strategies and are making an effort to direct students to some content understanding that requires thinking, not just responding with prior knowledge or just parroting back what has been said previously. The strategies that candidates are using may or may not be working, but their purpose is clearly to get students to think more deeply. These candidates have more to learn about using strategies effectively, but they are making a reasonable effort to get students to think.

- Between 2 and 3: **At level 3**, candidates are using the responses to guide what they do next, in such a way that they are building student understanding. It is evident from candidates' responses that they are evaluating the students' responses and making decisions accordingly to support students in developing the desired understanding or skills.
- Between 3 and 4: **At level 4**, candidates are making thinking visible so that students understand the reasoning behind at least some responses, modeling thinking processes or helping students understand what is important to notice and talk about in the content area.

Assessment Rubrics

6 Analyzing student work from an assessment

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Student errors, skills, and understanding − This focus is reflected in both the assessment criteria (including criteria reflected in a rubric) and in the analysis of student performance on the assessment. It ranges from a focus that is off target with respect to the candidate-identified standards/objectives at Level 1 to identifying partial understandings and using patterns in student work as windows into student understanding at Level 4.
- Patterns in student performance − This involves noticing some trends in student performance, either for the class as a whole, for individual students over time, or for subgroups of students. It ranges from unsystematic identification of gross differences between levels of student performance at Level 2 to identifying patterns in both the whole class as well as for either individuals or subgroups in Levels 3 and 4.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: **At Level 1**, either the assessment criteria and/or analysis are not aligned with the standards/objectives identified as being assessed or evidence in the student work samples is not consistent with the conclusions drawn. This may be due to either flaws in the assessment instrument chosen or to flaws in the analysis. An "analysis" that does not address student performance, e.g., a description of instruction leading to the assessment, though not referenced in the rubric, also merits a Level 1 rating. Another way to score at Level 1 is if there are no evaluative criteria or rubric. **At Level 2**, the candidate's analysis is a listing of students' successes and errors or misunderstandings which are related to the relevant standards/objectives. However,

the candidate makes few attempts to use these to understand what the student might have been thinking or doing as they produced their responses. A Level 2 analysis also identifies a few general characteristics of student learning or performances that constitute differing degrees of attainment of the learning objectives.

- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, the analysis uses student errors as an indicator of student understanding. It goes beyond cataloguing successes and errors/misunderstandings on the assessment instrument to describe patterns, either for individuals or for subgroups of students, that shed light on the extent of student understanding or skill. In the case of errors or misunderstandings, the candidates uses patterns to probe for specific sources of misunderstandings, e.g., lack of understanding of a particular concept or procedure, inattention to detail. The pattern for individuals may be within the work sample or over time, using other sources of evidence and connecting them to the performance in the work sample provided. These patterns are strategically chosen to gain insight into possible intervention points to address student errors or misunderstandings in order for them to make progress relative to the standards/objectives.
- Between 3 and 4: **Level 4** adds partial understandings. The candidate is able to recognize incomplete progress toward the standards/objectives and identify parts that the student has mastered as well as additional parts that the student(s) need to work on. **At Level 4**, the detail and clarity of the analysis indicates a depth of understanding of student performance and more comprehensive consideration of various dimensions of student performance than analyses scored at Level 3.

7 Using assessment to inform teaching

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Focusing of next steps − This refers to the degree of targeting of the strategies in the proposed next steps. It ranges from strategies that do not focus on student needs identified in the analysis at Level 1 to strategies that strategically target support to specific individuals and groups (the whole class or subgroups) to address specific needs. NOTE: The next steps may address students who may need greater challenge as well as students who are not yet fully meeting the learning goals.
- Basis for next steps − This relates to the breadth of needs that are addressed by the next steps. It ranges from general needs within the class at Level 2 to more specific needs that vary by individual or subgroup at Levels 3 and 4.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: There are three ways to achieve a **Level** 1 rating: 1) the next steps are either vaguely described, e.g., “more support” with no details as to the focus of support or how it would be offered; 2) the next steps are not very closely related to any of the conclusions drawn in the analysis; or 3) the analysis was so flawed that the next steps are not suitable to meet student needs indicated by the student work samples. **At Level 2**, the next steps are based on broadly-defined patterns of performance, and are focused on student misunderstandings, errors, or a need for greater challenge.

- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, the next steps are more targeted to individuals or groups and the needs addressed are more specifically defined. The next steps are based on a deeper level of analysis that distinguishes needs of individuals or subgroups.
- Between 3 and 4: **At Level 4**, the next steps are very targeted, in such a way as to indicate a clear understanding of the key features of content and/or language standards/objectives as well as how to use knowledge about students to help them learn.

8 Using Feedback to Promote Student Learning

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Feedback to students: Feedback may include not only the written feedback on the student work samples, but also an account of oral feedback. The oral feedback may include descriptions of brief conferences with the student or feedback given to the whole class. It ranges from inaccurate feedback or feedback that is so general that it is not useful at Level 1 to developmentally appropriate feedback that supports the students in understanding how to analyze their own work at Level 4.
- Strong understanding of students and content and language goals: This appears only in Level 4. It refers to feedback that is grounded in strong understanding of the individual students as well as of content and academic language that allows the candidate to tailor the feedback to the specific students and their needs.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: **At Level 1**, the feedback is all general, like "Good job!", "Needs work!", "C", or "44/50"; the student gets a general notion of whether or not s/he is doing well, but no sense of exactly what s/he did well and how to improve the work. Candidates who exhibit significant inaccuracies in their feedback that could mislead or confuse the students are also scored at Level 1. **At Level 2**, the feedback is timely and provides some information about both strengths and what needs improving related to specific goals within the learning segment. Timeliness of feedback should be considered in regard to the developmental level of students and generally should range from *immediate* for grades K-2, up to *a few days* for grades 10-12.
- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, the feedback is more specific than in Level 2, offering students an opportunity for a deeper understanding of what made their performance strong or weak and how to improve it.
- Between 3 and 4: **At Level 4**, the feedback is not only specific but also supportive; it invites the student to extend his/her thinking about the work. It is tailored to the individual student and the content and language learning goals that are the focus of the work.

Reflection Rubrics

9 Monitoring Student Progress

NOTE: Evidence for this rubric comes primarily from the Daily Reflections.

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Monitoring student learning − This reflects the attention that candidates give to student learning in their reflections. It ranges from an inconsistent focus on student learning at Level 1 to consideration of the extent to which students are making progress toward meeting standards/objectives at Levels 3 and 4.
- Adjustments in instruction − This reflects the purpose of the adjustments to instruction which, for novices, will usually occur between, and not within, lessons. It ranges from limited evidence of adjusting instruction to improve student learning at Level 1 to adjustments that are focused on addressing specific learning needs, both for individual students and groups of students, at Level 4. For this rubric, these adjustments should not be only hypothetical, but you should see evidence that they have been implemented (unless the candidate is prevented from making desired adaptations by either the cooperating teacher or district policy; in this case, adjustments will be hypothetical only).

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: **At Level 1**, student learning is not consistently monitored. These reflections often make global assertions like "Went well today" without considering if this was true for all students or offering an observation of student performance that suggests what led to that conclusion. Alternatively, candidates may indicate that some students are having difficulty or, conversely, that students are easily learning the material, without considering any implications for the future lessons planned. **At Level 2**, the reflections on student learning resemble a list of what students could or could not successfully do during each lesson. The reflections may also include considerations of time management or problematic student behavior that are independent of the consequences for student learning. However, the modifications of plans is limited either to procedures for implementing activities (e.g., better estimating what can be done during the time period or being more clear about what is needed to complete a learning task) or to going over the same materials in the same way for students who did not understand.
- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, there may also be consideration of the use of instructional time to complete learning tasks, improving directions, or other classroom management issues, but a focus on student progress is also evident. Candidates' reflections are connected across lessons or associated with specific standards/objectives to give a notion of the degree of progress toward meeting the standards/objectives. At least some adjustments to instruction focus on specific learning needs, both for individuals and one or more groups of students (which may include the whole class).
- Between 3 and 4: **At Level 4**, the adjustments are well targeted at features of student learning for the learning segment that are most central in helping students meet the standards/objectives. These features differ among content areas, but are described in general terms in the rubric.

10 Reflecting on learning

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Grounding of reflections in research and theory − Candidates are expected to draw upon research and theory to reflect on their teaching practice. This ranges from extremely inappropriate uses of specific research or theory at Level 1 to the appropriate integration of research and theory with knowledge of their students and knowledge of the content area being taught at Level 4.
- Basis for changes in teaching practice − This ranges from proposed changes that reflect assumptions that contradict basic principles of teaching and learning at Level 1 to changes that are appropriate and intentionally targeted at improving the learning of individuals and groups at Level 4.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: One way to score **at Level 1** is to cite a theory or research finding that has nothing to do with the strategy, event, or student performance the candidate is reflecting on (e.g., using Piaget's stage theory as a rationale for group work) or to offer an erroneous interpretation or explanation of a research finding or theory (e.g., an assertion that Bloom's taxonomy suggests that students cannot analyze or evaluate ideas unless they have mastered basic skills in the content area). These errors should be egregious and not subtle. Alternatively, there is little or no evidence that candidates can make appropriate connections between their teaching practice and student learning. At **Level 2**, the reflections are consistent with theory and research, at a general level, but they are not closely connected. The candidate does not seem to be using research and theory to make sense of experience, but more searching for a way to apply familiar research and theory in some fashion. Candidates also identify changes in their teaching practice to solve some problem that they identified. These changes reflect an assumption about how their teaching affected student learning. You may know, based on experience, that either this assumption is not the most likely or the change that they suggest is not likely to work. However, the key idea is that the assumption or the change would seem reasonable to candidates, given their limited experience at this stage of their teaching careers in applying what they have learned.
- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, candidates use principles of theory and research to make sense of what they observed about their students and their learning. This should be explicit (thought not necessarily detailed) in the reflections.
- Between 3 and 4: Compared with a level 3 performance, **at Level 4**, there is a closer connection between the research/theory cited, knowledge of students, and knowledge of content. The changes proposed address the learning of both individuals and groups of students and are tied to the standards/objectives for the learning segment.

Rubrics Based on Evidence Across Teaching Event Tasks

The academic language rubrics differ from the previous rubrics in that they are designed to draw from evidence across all tasks. Note that they focus on academic language both as a medium for learning content and as an independent dimension of content learning.

The academic language that is the focus of these rubrics is defined as the language needed to understand and communicate in the academic disciplines in age-appropriate ways, and includes such things as subject-specific vocabulary, grammatical structures that are an integral part of oral and written texts in the content area (e.g., If….then; By …., the author is….), language functions (e.g., predicting, reporting, explaining, convincing), and structures and conventions that are characteristic of types of oral and written texts commonly used in a field (e.g., lab reports, literary discussions, presentations of a problem solution). Academic language also occurs in tasks where language is less structured such as think-pair-share, asking questions to clarify understanding, or identifying main points in a lecture.

While these rubrics are critical to instruction of English learners, they also apply to instruction of native speakers of varieties of English, and even speakers fluent in the academic English used in school who will be expanding their command of academic English. However, the candidate should not focus on the language development of fluent speakers of academic English while ignoring English learners and speakers of varieties of English. The overarching idea is the extent to which candidates are making the structure of oral or written texts in the learning tasks transparent to students so that they can better understand and produce that type of text and understand the meaning of subject-specific vocabulary so that they can comprehend it and use it appropriately. Examples of oral text types include challenging another student's problem solution (for mathematics students) or communicating comparisons for kindergartners by using words such as "more" or "less". Examples of written text types include cause-effect arguments in history-social science or descriptions of an observation of a scientific phenomenon or rules for a game in physical education.

Academic language (also know as English Language Development when tailored to the needs of English Learners) is an area of growth for many PACT programs, and many faculty/supervisors are engaging in professional development to better understand it. The PACT website, www.pacttpa.org, has materials on Academic Language within the 2008 Implementation Conference section. The password can be obtained by PACT scorers from your PACT coordinator or by e-mailing kendylls@stanford.edu.

11 Understanding language demands

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Abilities of students to meet learning segment's language demands – The assumption is that candidates will consider their students' language strengths and areas for growth in relation to the tasks planned for the learning segment and select, develop, and/or modify instructional materials to assist their students' growth in academic language. This big idea addresses the match between students' language strengths and abilities compared to the language in the resulting instructional materials. In the context of promoting growth in academic language as well as in other cognitive learning, the candidate describes language strengths that can be drawn on for students or groups in the class as well as areas in which particular students might struggle and need support. The expectation is that candidates acknowledge language abilities even in

struggling students upon which they can draw to build instruction. Candidates are asked to describe the language development of their students in the Context for Learning commentary and the language demands of learning tasks in the Planning Commentary, but additional information may appear in other places where candidates comment on their students' proficiency with academic language compared to the language in the tasks. At Level 1, candidates primarily focus on what students cannot do in relation to the language of the oral and written tasks in the learning segment, with little or no recognition of any language strengths. At Level 2, candidates add a description of language strengths related to the specific instructional and assessment tasks and address students' strengths and challenges in oral and written language. modalities. At level 3, candidates explain the language strengths and challenges in terms of students' varied exposure to language (both English and, if known, e.g., previous schooling, in another language). At Level 4, the candidate's description addresses the strengths and challenges of students from the students most challenged by academic language to those with the most mastery.

- Features of key oral or written text types – There are key oral and written text types that are associated with every discipline, with subject-specific examples provided in one of the footnotes for this rubric. The candidate is expected to consider critical text types that are included in the learning segment and to describe language demands that addresses key components for at least one task. Organizational features of text types might include topic sentences and supporting details for paragraphs, a five paragraph essay with the opening and closing paragraphs summarizing the argument and the three middle paragraphs stating and elaborating on key points supporting the argument, the purpose and structure of sections in science lab reports, writing mathematics equations and proofs vertically with each subsequent line representing the next step in reasoning, or headers for tables and charts. Styles correspond to expectations for language in the field and include greater use of adjectives for narratives as opposed to persuasive or causal texts, active vs. passive voice, or the use of slang to establish character in creative writing but limited use of slang in quotes from the text in literary analysis and no use of slang at all in science lab reports. Grammatical features might include sentence frames (While _____ got food by _____, today we get food by _____), syntax such as the use of mathematical notation in equations, or sentence starters typical of certain types of texts (first…, then…, finally… to establish sequence or I agree/disagree with what ___ said because….). This varies from just mentioning text types at Level 1 to explaining why key vocabulary and phrases are important and differ in difficulty for specific students.
- Challenging words and phrases – We are attempting to get candidates to go beyond listing all new key terms associated with the learning segment. After all, every time we meet a new topic, there is new vocabulary associated with it, and most people learn the new vocabulary easily in context. Candidates should identify which words of phrases might be especially easy, e.g., cognates with words from the primary language or English words students already know, or problematic, e.g., idioms, multiple phrases used interchangeably to mean the same thing (typical of mathematics word problems), familiar words with a different meaning. This ranges from listing key terms or new vocabulary at level 1 to explaining why specific words

and phrases might be challenging for particular students as well as why they are integral to specific learning or assessment tasks in Levels 3 and 4.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: **Level 1** reflects a very beginning understanding of language demands, with little or no understanding of language development. Language development is limited to noting what students *cannot* do. Candidates list language demands and key terms found in the learning segment but do not relate these to students' English language proficiency. Candidates do not expand on identified language demands to describe why tasks and phrases are important to the learning segment and do not state why language may present challenges to students when progressing through the learning segment. **At Level 2**, candidates identify what students *can* do, considering students at different levels of language development, in addition to what they might find challenging. Candidates go beyond naming text types to identify features of the text types and address why words and phrases in the learning segment are important when progressing through the learning segment.
- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, candidates not only discuss students' strengths and challenges in context of the content of the learning segment, but explain how strengths and weaknesses relate to students' differing education or language backgrounds. Text type feature(s) for at least one identified language task in the learning segment is explained and differentiated appropriately for students at varying levels of English language proficiency. The differentiation may mean different levels of support, more complex features for students who have already mastered the ones being taught, or the substitution of simpler language for students at earlier stages of language proficiency. Key words and phrases, beyond specialized vocabulary, are identified, situated in the context of specific learning or assessment tasks, and explained in regard to why they might present challenges to students' progression through the learning segment.
- Between 3 and 4: **At Level 4**, the discussion of student development addresses the full range of students in the class, not overlooking either the students with the greatest mismatch between language development and the language demands or the students who need greater challenge to grow in their language development. Text type features for multiple identified language demands in the learning segment are explained with consideration of varying level of English language proficiency. Candidates include students with varying linguistic or educational experiences when describing challenges of key words and phrases in the learning segment.

12 Supporting Academic Language Development

Big ideas and their progression across the rubric:

- Scaffolding or support for academic language – Scaffolds refer to strategies to help students better understand content and understand and/or use academic language. Scaffolds act as a bridge to address gaps between students' current language development and the language demands of the learning and assessment tasks. At

Level 1, there is very little support OR language gaps are largely avoided by oversimplifying language and/or content. At the other end of the range, Level 4, candidates not only provide bridges to help students understand core content but also use strategies to further develop proficiency in academic language and provide rationales for the strategies.

- Explanations of the design of the scaffolds or support – This refers to explanations of how the scaffolds and/or support are designed to address the language gaps between students' current abilities and the language demands of the learning segment. It ranges from explanations of how the design functions to support students at Level 3 to explaining how the scaffolds will be progressively reduced as students' language abilities increase.

Level differences:

- Between 1 and 2: **At Level 1,** either little or intermittent language support is provided to address student needs in relationship to the language demands of tasks or the content and/or language is so oversimplified so that little development in either content or language takes place. **At Level 2**, candidates identify specific strategies for closing identified language gaps between student levels of development and the demands of learning tasks and assessments. However, while these strategies allow access to content, there is an *absence* of strategies that are specifically targeted at developing language proficiency. Examples of such strategies that provide access to content without developing specific academic language include using pictures in the absence of accompanying language or pairing English learners with a more fluent English speaker who shares the primary language with no provision for the more fluent student doing more than serving as a translator to help the less fluent student through the learning task.
- Between 2 and 3: **At Level 3**, the scaffolds and supports offered to bridge gaps in needs relative to demands not only provide access to content understanding but also target language development through modeling, practice, and feedback. Strategies to help give students understand curriculum content that does not build English proficiency may be present as well to build content understandings. However, at Level 3 there explicit strategies to develop academic language must be present. In addition, there must be a sound rationale for how the scaffolds and support work.
- Between 3 and 4: **At Level 4**, the explanation of the scaffolds/support and how they work includes a description of how the candidate plans to decrease the scaffolds/support as students' language abilities increase.