

TEACHER ASSESSMENT ON PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1: PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

TKES QUICK GUIDE

WHY IS PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE A NECESSARY COMPONENT OF AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM?

Research is consistent in defining effective teachers as those who have a deep professional understanding of their content areas, curriculum, and students. Professional knowledge is critical to providing students relevant learning experiences at an appropriate depth of knowledge.

Adequate knowledge of content and subject matter is a prerequisite for ALL teachers; however, successful classroom

Teachers who lack subject-matter knowledge usually lack confidence in the classroom, which in turn, has significant impact on their planning and teaching.

instruction is a much more complex activity. Effective teachers have a complete understanding of their content as well as an understanding of other related content areas and how those interact in the real world. These educators also have a firm grasp on pedagogy, the strategies necessary to effectively teach

students, and curriculum, the state-mandated expectations and standards for a course.

When teachers have a deep understanding of the subject being taught, they are more likely to ask higher order questions, encourage students to explore further explanations in learning topics, engage students at a deeper level, and have a student centered classroom. Most importantly, effective teaching does not simply reside in the amount and/or quality of knowledge that the teacher possesses, but rather in how the teacher can translate that knowledge into student learning. In order to impact student learning, teachers must utilize a strong and ongoing understanding of the required curriculum, be able to assess how well students have learned the curriculum, and know how to effectively reteach to ensure mastery for all students. Content expertise without the inherent understanding of how to relay that knowledge to the learner will result in ineffective classrooms.

Professional knowledge requires one to combine subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and an understanding of students and their learning processes, all for the purposes of increasing student achievement. One of these factors without the other will not offer the impact needed to improve learning outcomes.

KEY ELEMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE:

Professional Knowledge that is essential to being an effective teacher encompasses the following factors:

Subject Matter Knowledge:

What content do I teach?

- Maintain an accurate, deep, and current knowledge of the subject matter.
- On-going knowledge is enhanced through professional development, furthering education courses, reading current journals and research, and participating in professional organizations.

Pedagogical Knowledge:

How do I teach it?

- Use relevant instructional strategies to enhance student achievement.
- Collaborate with other effective teachers to design research based classroom strategies to increase student understanding and achievement.

Curricular Knowledge:

What do I teach?

- Address appropriate curriculum standards and have a full understanding of expectations for student learning.
- Base instruction on goals that reflect high expectations for all students and a clear understanding of the curriculum.

Learner Knowledge:

To whom do I teach?

- Acquire an understanding of the development of the age group you teach.
- Utilize a variety of data to ensure understanding of the types of students you instruct as well as their depth of understanding.
- Be keenly aware of what cultural, environmental, and social issues may impact the learning of your students.