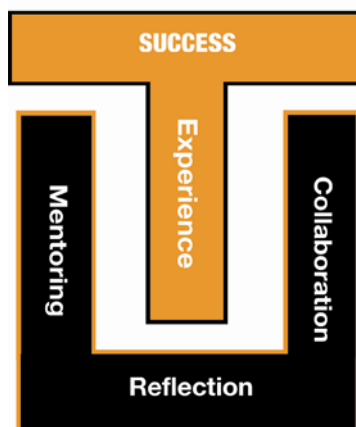


# Procedures for Identifying and Resolving Professional Performance Problems for Licensure Students



Prepared by Offices of Professional Licensure and School-  
Based Experiences

University of Tennessee  
College of Education, Health and Human Sciences

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## **PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING AND RESOLVING PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS FOR LICENSURE STUDENTS**

Many professional licensure students report that their internships, or licensure field-based experiences, are the most demanding requirements of their professional preparation. Despite the rigorous nature of the internship and field-based experiences, most licensure students encounter little real difficulty and successfully complete their licensure requirements. However, some students will need varying amounts of special help from mentoring teachers, building principals, and/or mentoring professors. Only a very small percentage of interns and professional licensure students develop problems of such magnitude that their ability or disposition to complete the program is brought into question.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide an overview of the procedures that are in place for addressing professional performance problems during the internship and licensure field-based experiences. The primary goal of this process is to improve students' teaching performance so they can be more successful and effective in carrying out their professional responsibilities. The processes outlined here are focused on the internship or professional field-based experiences; and, while similar to dispositional processes that are in place for students admitted into teacher licensure programs, they are intended to encompass issues related to knowledge and skills. (Please see Appendix A for the steps in "Reporting and Processing Dispositional Deficiencies.") These processes are separate from, and in addition to, dispositional expectations that are in place once the student gains admission to a teacher education program. If, after completing the steps outlined here for addressing major problems, the student's professional performance has not improved, the licensure program may be terminated for the student.

### **PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

Evaluation of a student's professional performance is an important part of the licensure experience and is conducted throughout the program. The objectives of the evaluation process are to assess professional growth and assist the student in developing a reference point from which he/she can examine professional behaviors, recognize and implement effective professional teaching strategies, and identify areas that need improvement.

Regular evaluations are conducted with all professional licensure students using the *Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth*. The *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* is a research-based, public description of a teacher's performance in areas validated as critical to effective teaching. The framework provides descriptors for the complex act of teaching that allow evaluators and observers to make reasonable and fair decisions about teacher performance in the classroom. This framework provides 44 criteria clustered in six domains. These criteria are documented through both empirical and theoretical research as having a positive impact on student learning.

The *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* provides three essential elements for developing and sustaining highly qualified and highly effective teachers:

1. A common language for analyzing and evaluating teaching performance;
2. Research-validated practices to inform teaching performance;
3. Clear indicators of performance for self-assessment, objective feedback, and the development of an individual professional growth plan.

Copies of the *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* are available in the Office of School-Based Experiences, 329 Bailey Education Complex, and on the Tennessee State Department of Education website at: <http://www.state.tn.us/education/frameval/index.html>

Determination of unsatisfactory progress or professional performance for a professional licensure student will be initiated in a timely manner by the mentoring professor, the mentoring teacher, or the building principal. Such feedback is often done in a collaborative model involving all three of these individuals. Ordinarily, their efforts, along with those of the student, will result in the

resolution of problems or concerns. Should a professional performance problem be identified during the licensure program that is not resolved in this manner, the following steps will be taken to help the student address the concern.

## **STEPS FOR IDENTIFYING AND RESOLVING UNSATISFACTORY PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE**

In identifying unsatisfactory professional performance by a professional licensure student, the Professional Team (mentoring professor, mentoring teacher, and building principal) working with the student will rely on facts as presented through formal observations, evaluations, and documents of conferences regarding specific concerns. Broad general statements not supported by documentation are not sufficient for the model put forth in this document. Appropriate documentation is critical to the process of identifying and resolving unsatisfactory progress or professional performance. Written documentation, especially in sequence, may reveal patterns of behavior which in isolation do not appear significant. In efforts to help students address performance problems, written documentation is important for clear communication of the issues being addressed. Documentation must withstand the careful review and scrutiny of a number of involved parties, others must provide a clear and formal record of:

1. The specific feedback given to the student;
2. A summary of efforts to provide assistance to the student;
3. Possible consequences to the student if identified unsatisfactory professional performance is not corrected during the specified time line.

(See Appendix B for Formal Assessment Guidelines.)

### **Step 1. First Notification of Unsatisfactory Progress or Professional Performance**

When a performance problem is first identified in the internship or field-based licensure experience, the member of the Professional Team identifying the problem will initiate a conversation to bring the concern to the attention of the student. The student will be informed that the mentoring teacher/professor will continue to monitor his/her progress in the area addressed. A Dispositional Deficiency Form has been developed for reporting professional problems at this level. (See Appendix C.) While performance problems may go beyond dispositions, they are behavioral indicators of disposition deficiencies and should be reported on this form. The form should be completed after a conversation (Step 1) is held with the intern/licensure student. After the intern/licensure student and professional team member sign the form, a copy is provided to the Coordinator of School-Based Experiences to be placed in the student's file, and a second copy is given to the student.

Responsible Party: Cheryl Kershaw, Coordinator of School-Based Experiences and Placements

### **Step 2. Second Notification of Unsatisfactory Progress or Professional Performance**

If satisfactory progress has not been made as a result of Step 1, the student, mentoring professor, mentoring teacher, and/or building principal will meet again to discuss the unsatisfactory professional performance. This meeting is a formal notification to the student that members of the Professional Team have continued to observe an area of concern that needs improvement. A brief, written Summary Statement from the meeting will be prepared by the mentoring professor, mentoring teacher, or building principal identifying the area of weakness or problem that will need to be corrected. (See samples below.) The student will be asked to read and sign the Summary Statement. The Summary Statement will provide a synopsis of the conversation that occurred and the steps, including a timetable, necessary to address the unsatisfactory professional performance. A copy of the Summary Statement will be placed in the student's file in the Office of School-Based Experiences and a copy will be given to the student.

Responsible Party: Cheryl Kershaw, Coordinator of School-Based Experiences and Placements

### Example 1 of Summary Statement

**Date:** September 15, 2008

**Area of Concern:** Attendance and Punctuality

**Summary of Concern:** You are required to be at school by 8:00 a.m. and are expected to have signed in on or before that time each morning. It is important for you to be ready to begin the school day in a professional manner. Your attendance record has not shown adherence to this policy.

**Timeframe for Correcting Area of Concern:** Punctuality must be demonstrated from this point on. Your attendance record will be checked at the end of next week.

Signature of Mentoring Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that punctuality is a professional responsibility. I will correct this area of concern.

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Example 2 of Summary Statement

**Date:** October 15, 2008

**Area of Concern:** Lesson Plans

**Summary of Concern:** Planning is an important part of effective instruction. You have consistently failed to have your lesson plans prepared to be shared with your mentor in a timely manner. You must have formal lesson plans prepared and submitted for review by your mentoring teacher no later than one week prior to the time that the lesson is to be taught.

**Timeframe for Correcting Area of Concern:** As your mentoring teacher, I will sit down with you each week to review your formal lesson plans. We will do this during our planning period at 1:30 every Friday.

Signature of Mentoring Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that my lesson plans must be prepared and submitted to my mentor in a timely manner. I will correct this area of concern.

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3. Initiation of a Professional Development Plan

When the first two steps fail to produce needed improvements, there is a more formal set of procedures for addressing the concern(s). The next step is to call a meeting of the Professional Team, which includes the student, mentoring teacher, faculty liaison, building principal, and mentoring professor. Any team member may request the meeting of the Professional Team. At this stage, once the membership is established, the committee shall be called the Licensure Evaluation Committee (LEC). The mentoring professor shall serve as chair of the committee. Individuals not serving on the LEC, but who have had contact with the intern/licensure student may provide information to the LEC. The Professional Team may ask other individuals to be included in the LEC. These individuals include:

- Faculty member(s) from the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences
- Coordinator of School-Based Experiences & Placements
- Director of Student Services
- School System Central Office Representative(s)

At the time the LEC meeting is requested, the building principal (or designee) shall determine whether or not the intern/licensure student will remain in the school system classroom and/or school ground until the meeting occurs. If the intern/licensure student is not to remain in the classroom during this period, the principal is responsible for communicating this to the intern/licensure student in writing. No reassignment, or other arrangements, for the intern/licensure student will be made until the meeting is conducted. No fewer than two (2) days before the meeting, the intern/licensure student will receive a written summary statement of items to be discussed from the mentoring professor. The intern/licensure student will be informed that he/she may present information at the meeting on his/her behalf.

During the meeting with the intern/licensure student, each LEC member will share documented information pertinent to the intern/licensure student's unsuccessful progress or professional performance. The intern/licensure student will have the opportunity to respond to the documentation presented by the College and/or the school system and to present his/her own relevant information. At the conclusion of the discussion, the intern/licensure student will be asked to leave the meeting in order to provide the LEC time to review the information which was presented. (Note: The intern/licensure student will be told to stay close at hand as the LEC's decision will be communicated to the intern/licensure student after this review takes place.)

After reviewing the information, the LEC may make one of the following recommendations:

1. To have the intern/licensure student meet specific professional performance or behavioral improvements as outlined in a written Professional Development Plan designed for the intern/licensure student at the student's present off-campus site; or
2. To reassign the intern/licensure student to another site/mentoring teacher under closely monitored conditions, with a corresponding Professional Development Plan.

The chair of the LEC will call the intern/licensure student back into the meeting room to inform him/her of the LEC's decision. Additionally, the LEC chair shall be responsible for informing all involved parties of the committee's decision, including the intern/licensure student's Department Head and the Associate Dean for Professional Licensure.

When informed of the LEC's decision, the intern/licensure student will also receive the following information in his/her Professional Development Plan:

- a) An explanation of how the unsatisfactory professional performance is to be corrected;
- b) A timetable of accomplishing the desired results; and
- c) The consequences should the unsatisfactory professional performance not be corrected.

All participants must sign the Professional Development Plan. A copy of the plan will be put in the intern/licensure student's file in the Office of School-Based Experiences, and a copy will be given to the intern/licensure student.

Responsible Party: Dulcie Peccolo, Director of Student Services

#### **Step 4: Determination of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Performance for Professional Development Plans**

##### **Successful Progress**

If the intern/licensure student meets all requirements and stipulations of the Professional Development Plan from Step 3 within the designated timeframe, the LEC chair shall report, in writing, to the intern/licensure student's Department Head and the Associate Dean of Professional Licensure that the intern/licensure student has successfully completed the corrective Professional Development Plan.

## **Unsuccessful Progress**

If the intern/licensure student does not complete all requirements and stipulations of the Professional Development Plan, the LEC chair shall call, no later than five (5) days prior to the time set for completion of the Professional Development Plan, a meeting of the LEC to determine the next course of action. This allows the LEC to address the issue in a timely manner if progress is not being made. The recommendations of the LEC shall be given to the intern/licensure student's Department Head.

If the intern/licensure student fails to make satisfactory progress under **Recommendations 1 or 2 in Step 3**, the LEC may recommend termination of the internship/licensure field-based experience to the student's department head. The intern/licensure student has the right to submit materials/talk with the Department Head to appeal the termination of his/her internship or field-based experience. The Department Head can accept the LEC's recommendation or meet with the committee to seek clarification of their recommendation. If the Department Head decides to modify or reject the decision of the LEC, he/she shall notify the chair of the LEC of his/her decision. The Department Head has authority concerning the disposition of the internship/licensure requirements at this stage and shall take the appropriate action.

In the event that the Department Head's decision is to terminate the internship/licensure field-based experience, the mentoring professor will be asked to assign a grade of "Unsatisfactory Progress" for the internship/field-based licensure hours in which the intern/licensure student is registered.

Responsible Party: The Student's Department Head

## **The Appeals Process**

The decision reached by the intern/licensure student's Department Head may be appealed. The intern/licensure student may first appeal the Department Head's ruling in writing to the Associate Dean for Professional Licensure. If the Associate Dean upholds the Department Head's ruling, the intern/licensure student may then appeal the decision to a college-level Professional Education Grievance Committee. This committee shall be appointed and convened by the Associate Dean for Professional Licensure in consultation with the Dean of College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. The committee shall have the following membership:

A. Two (2) members of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences faculty who are not members of the Professional Team or the LEC, and are experienced in professional education preparation.

In instances where the intern/licensure student represents a collaborative professional education program housed in a unit outside the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences (Audiology/Speech Pathology, Social Work, Music, Agriculture, etc.), one (1) faculty member must represent the unit within the university where the student's program is located. The faculty member must be experienced in professional education preparation in the academic home of the student. The Associate Dean for Professional Licensure shall appoint the faculty member.

B. The chair of the Professional Education Grievance Committee will be appointed through the Dean's office, and may not be a member of the student's Professional Team, or the LEC.

After a review of the student's file, including documentation of the professional performance issue, the committee will make its recommendation to the Dean, whose decision, within the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, is final.

Responsible Party: Associate Dean for Professional Licensure

**Additional Circumstances That Could Result in Termination of the Internship or Professional Licensure Field-Based Experience**

Although most action as severe as termination of the licensure program will be arrived at bilaterally and will involve agreement between school system and college authorities (as represented by the LEC or the Associate Dean for Professional Licensure), such a decision can be made unilaterally. The agreement between the school systems and the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences has provisions for the unilateral withdrawal (termination of the licensure program) for an intern/student.

Should the authorities with the intern/student's school system choose to terminate the internship/licensure field-based experience unilaterally, it shall be the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Professional Licensure, or his/her designee, to obtain signed statements from those individuals directly involved. If the College should, unilaterally, remove an intern/licensure student from an internship or licensure field-based experience in a school system, the Associate Dean for Professional Licensure (or designee), will provide the superintendent/director (or designee) with a detailed statement, setting forth reasons for such action. Should the College terminate an internship or professional licensure field-based experience, the student may appeal this decision to the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences Professional Education Grievance Committee.

## Appendix A

### Process for Reporting and Processing Dispositional Deficiencies

**An Instructor who becomes aware of Disposition Deficiency during a course follows these procedures: (Form available in the Office of School-Based Experiences, Bailey Education Complex 329)**

Complete Candidate Disposition Deficiency Form (DDF), describing the troublesome behavior.

Meet with the candidate to discuss the DDF and obtain candidate signature (indicates awareness, not necessarily agreement). Make intern aware that he/she may write an explanation of a response to the deficiency and submit to the Office of School-Based Experiences.

Add comments to the DDF summarizing the conference and record the date.

Submit the DDF Form to the Office of School-Based Experiences within three (3) working days of the conference with the candidate.

**A School Mentor for a field experience, student teaching, or internship follows these procedures: (Form available in the Office of School-Based Experiences, Bailey Education Complex 329)**

Complete Candidate Disposition Deficiency Form (DDF), describing the troublesome behavior.

Meet with the candidate and the candidate's University Mentor to discuss the DDF and obtain candidate signature.

Add comments to the DDF summarizing the conference and record the date.

Submit the DDF Form to the candidate's University Mentor after the conference has ended.

**A University Mentor of a field experience, student teaching, or internship experience follows these procedures:**

Follow the same steps as an **Instructor** if a deficiency is noted by the University Mentor.

When the deficiency is reported by a **School Mentor**, insure that the completed DDF Form is submitted to the Office of School-Based Experiences within three (3) working days of the conference with the candidate.

**The Advisor, Instructional Team Leader or Designated Faculty Member has the following responsibilities:**

#### Level 1

Record the DDF form in a secure file not available to the candidate.

Monitor the candidate's file to determine if more than one DDF has been filed for the student.

**Level 2: Upon receipt of a SECOND DDF form for the student, The Steps for Level 1 will be followed and will also include:**

Contact the candidate within five working days to schedule a conference, at which time a Remediation plan may be developed. This plan will be developed at the discretion of the advisor.

Following the conference, date and summarize the conference and remediation plan (if developed) as an addition to the DDF Form.

**Level 3: Upon receipt of a THIRD DDF form for the candidate,**

**The steps for Levels 1 and 2 will be followed,** with the exception that a remediation plan with timelines is mandatory.

The candidate will sign a form agreeing to the remediation plan and acknowledging awareness that an additional DDF Form can be grounds for removal from the teacher preparation program.

**Level 4: Upon receipt of a FOURTH DDF form for the candidate,**

Contact the student within five (5) working days to schedule a conference, at which time the candidate's progression in the program will be reviewed along with the written agreement signed by the candidate. At this time the candidate will be advised that a recommendation for the candidate's removal from the teacher preparation program will be sent to the Department Head. The candidate will also be advised that he or she has the right to prepare and deliver a written response to the Department Head within fourteen (14) days for consideration along with the recommendation.

Ask the candidate to sign a statement that he or she is aware of the information being sent to the Department Head although he or she may not necessarily agree with it.

Forward copies of all documentation regarding Dispositions for the candidate (including the form indication awareness of the process) to the Department Head along with a copy of the "Recommendation for Removal From Program" form to the Department Head within 24 hours of the meeting.

**The Department Head has the following responsibilities upon receipt of the "Recommendation for Removal From Program" (RRFP) form L:**

Review information sent by the Advisor, Instructional Team Leader, or Designated Faculty Member.

Read carefully any written responses submitted by the candidate.

Meet with the candidate and the Advisor, Instructional Team Leader, or Designated Faculty Member within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the RRFP form to review all information and make a decision.

Direct one of the following actions be taken regarding the candidate's status: continuation in the program; removal from the program; or insufficient evidence on which to make a decision (in which case the candidate continues in the program).

**The Candidate may further appeal to the Associate Dean for Teacher Licensure within Fourteen (14) days of receiving the decision from the Department Head.**

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## Appendix B

### Preparing For a Formal Assessment of Teaching Performance: Suggestions for the Evaluator

1. Prepare yourself for the proper use of the evaluation instruments. Become completely informed on procedures to follow and criteria to be used in making ratings on the evaluation instruments. (*The Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth.*)
2. At the beginning of the year, fully inform the intern/student of the procedures associated with the evaluation process.
  - A. Notify the intern/student of the evaluation schedule.
  - B. Provide the intern/student with a copy of the evaluation instrument.
  - C. Review criteria to be used in completing the instrument.
  - D. Distribute copies of the evaluation to the intern/student and copies to other team members.
3. Provide the intern/student with a written, signed, dated copy of each formal observation immediately after the evaluation. Conduct a formal conference with the intern/student after each evaluation.
4. Notify the intern/student of any determination that his/her duties are not being performed in a satisfactory manner and describe the unsatisfactory professional performance.
  - A. Notification and explanation must be timely.
  - B. Feedback should be presented in a manner that is as positive as possible indicating strengths as well as areas to strengthen.
  - C. Written documentation must accompany evaluations.
5. Confer with the intern/student and make recommendations as to specific areas of unsatisfactory professional performance and provide assistance in correcting deficiencies within a prescribed period of time.

The evaluation/observation document from the *Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth*, or the College's *Comprehensive Evaluation Mid-year Report*, must be completed as prescribed by the policies and procedures of the Office of School-Based Experiences. A Development Plan must be communicated to the student and submitted to the Office of School-Based Experiences for each assessment of unsatisfactory professional performance noted in the document. This can be written on the assessment documents or on an attachment to the evaluation itself. (See Sample Observation Narrative in Appendix D.) The evaluation document must also include specific directions for how interns must correct any documented unsatisfactory professional performance.

The first evaluation of the intern/student should reflect the beginning nature of the internship or field-based licensure experience. Each additional evaluation should document that the intern/student has progressed in his/her professional performance. If an intern/student has his/her highest rating on the first evaluation, it is difficult to document that successful professional performance has occurred during the internship or field-based licensure experience.

## Appendix C

### Dispositional Deficiency Form

Instructor/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Conference \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Please Check Dispositional Area/areas of Concern

- 1. Providing equitable learning opportunities for all students
- 2. Promoting achievement of students at all levels
- 3. Recognizing students' unique prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests as part of the context for students learning
- 4. Understanding and involving a wide variety of resources in the school, family, culture, and community to facilitate student learning
- 5. Seeking out, developing, and implementing the most appropriate methods to meet the diverse learning needs of the students
- 6. Developing students' skills as problem-solvers as they progress toward becoming independent, self-directed learners
- 7. Life-long learning and personal growth through reflection, seeking constructive feedback, and willingness to learn from others and past experience
- 8. Effective planning and classroom organization as tools in maximizing the time available for instruction and learning
- 9. Collaborating with other professionals to improve the overall learning of students
- 10. Maintaining his/her position as a positive role model for students and others in Regular attendance, grooming, punctuality, and professional demeanor
- 11. Demonstrating positive work habits and interpersonal skills, demonstrating a Positive attitude, dependability, honesty and respect for others
- 12. Accepting responsibility for what occurs in his/her classroom and for other school-wide Responsibilities that contribute to student learning and a safe, orderly environment
- 13. Participating in professional growth activities within and outside the school
- 14. Maintaining the standards of confidentiality regarding student information and communications
- 15. Using sound judgment and thoughtful decision making with consideration of the consequences

Please describe the behavior and or language indicating deficiency

Signatures:

Teacher Candidate \_\_\_\_\_ (Indicates awareness not necessarily agreement)

Instructor/Mentor \_\_\_\_\_ Return form to Office of School-Based Experiences A329 Claxton Complex (BEC)

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## Appendix D

### Sample Observation Narrative

(A Supplement to the State of Tennessee Evaluation - Appraisal Record)

Post Observation Conference: J. Smith December 15, 2008

Today's observation took place in a 5th grade social studies class (Tuesday, December 14, 2007), The following discussion points out strengths as well as areas to strengthen as noted during the observation.

#### Areas of Strength:

You displayed a positive manner toward students - warm and encouraging.  
You gave clear and audible instructions.  
You provided redirection to prevent off-task behavior by several students.

#### Areas to Strengthen:

##### Specify expectations for classroom behavior

Several instances of inappropriate behavior were observed during the lesson. Although you instructed students several times to pay attention, your efforts were inconsistent and, therefore, unsuccessful. To encourage appropriate behavior you will need to explain to the students your expectations for their behavior and the reasons why they should behave in certain ways. Students need to have a clear understanding of what is acceptable behavior and what is not acceptable. You also need to make sure that your students have a clear understanding of the consequences when they "choose" to misbehave.

Of equal importance is your consistency in following through with the consequences. Students quickly and easily make a determination of "how far they can push a teacher." It will be to your advantage to demonstrate your fairness by your commitment to the stated rules of behavior.

##### Secure student attention

Providing information/directions when students are not attentive is a waste of a teacher's time and effort. As stated above, students need to understand they are expected to listen and attend. Failure to do so is their responsibility, as is the consequence. Today when you were instructing the class regarding the sequence of activities for the class period, many students were not listening. Later they did not hesitate to call out and interrupt your discussion to ask you to repeat what you had said earlier. This is unacceptable and disruptive to the learning of all students.

Your classroom management techniques should foster self-control and self discipline by your students.

##### Give administrative directions for class procedures/routines

Be prepared to communicate to the students what activities and/or tasks are to be done; when, where, and how the activities and/or tasks are to be done; and who will be involved in the activities and/or tasks. By creating a process of communication instructions, you will be able to maximize the amount of class time spent in learning.

### Communication of learning objectives

At no time during the lesson was the learning objective made clear to your students. Tell students what they are expected to learn and why it is necessary (value and relevance). Having a clear understanding of the lesson's learning objectives should help your students focus and understand the relevance of the material.

### Encourage higher-order thinking through appropriate levels of questioning

Include questions beyond the knowledge and comprehension level to provide students the opportunity for higher level thinking. Construct objectives that address the critical and creative thinking process.

### Check for understanding of lesson objective/content/directions

Verify that students are progressing in understanding content.

Ask students to explain their responses.

Ask yourself: What are the main points I want students to understand? It is also helpful in focusing student attention on the subject to ask for an explanation of the goals/objectives of the lesson following your introduction. Clarify directions and explanations when your students misunderstand them.

### Closure

Use closure to briefly ask students to summarize main points. Although closure does not have to be lengthy, it must be observable.