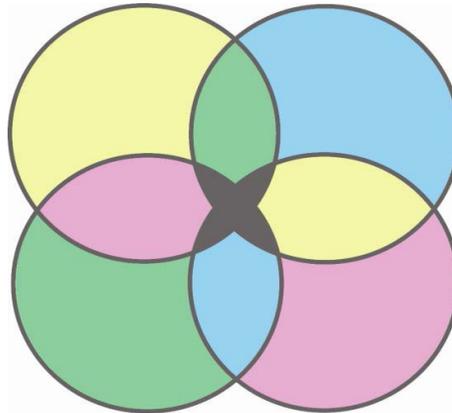


Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

4c: Communicating with Families



The Framework for Teaching
Charlotte Danielson

Objectives

4c: Communicating with Families

- ▶ Understand the elements of 4c
- ▶ Distinguish the difference in levels of performance of 4c
- ▶ Review examples of 4c behavior
- ▶ Identify my level of performance on 4c
- ▶ Incorporate strategies to improve my level of performance in 4c

Why Is “Communicating with Families” an Important Component of Effective Teaching?

- ▶ The ability of families to participate in their child's learning varies widely because of other family or job obligations.
- ▶ It is the responsibility of teachers to provide opportunities for families to understand both the instructional program and their child's progress.



Why Is “Communicating with Families” an Important Component of Effective Teaching? *(continued)*

- ▶ Teachers establish relationships with families by communicating to them about:
 - the instructional program
 - conferring with them about individual students
 - inviting them to be part of the educational process itself



Why Is “Communicating with Families” an Important Component of Effective Teaching? *(continued)*

- ▶ The level of family participation and involvement tends to be greater at the elementary level, when young children are just beginning school.
- ▶ The importance of regular communication with families of adolescents cannot be overstated.
- ▶ A teacher's effort to communicate with families conveys the teacher's essential caring, valued by families of students of all ages.





The Elements

1. Information about the instructional program

The teacher frequently provides information to families about the instructional program.

2. Information about individual students

The teacher frequently provides information to families about students' individual progress.

3. Engagement of families in the instructional program

The teacher frequently and successfully offers engagement opportunities to families so that they can participate in the learning activities.

Performance Grounded in Evidence

- ▶ Frequent and culturally appropriate information sent home regarding the instructional program and student progress
- ▶ Two-way communication between teacher and families
- ▶ Frequent opportunities for families to engage in the learning process



Relevant because...

- ▶ The teacher asks students to interview their parents about their cultural history and present it to the class.

Relevant

- ▶ The math teacher provides a handout for parents explaining why the class is spending so much time on algebraic reasoning.

Relevant

- ▶ The school newspaper announces the instructional focus of the current academic year.

Not Relevant

Performance Levels

- ▶ You will read four classroom observation descriptions.
- ▶ Arrange the descriptions in order.
- ▶ After all four, compare with your table and discuss specific reasons why you rated it as you did.

What Is the Level?

A. The teacher provides little information about the instructional program to families; the teacher's communication about students' progress is minimal.

The teacher does not respond, or responds insensitively, to parental concerns.

What Is the Level? *(continued)*

B. The teacher makes sporadic attempts to communicate with families about the instructional program and about the progress of individual students but does not attempt to engage families in the instructional program. The communication that does take place may not be culturally sensitive to those families.

What Is the Level? *(continued)*

C. The teacher communicates frequently with families in a culturally sensitive manner, with students contributing to the communication.

The teacher responds to family concerns with professional and cultural sensitivity.

The teacher's efforts to engage families in the instructional program are frequent and successful.

What Is the Level? *(continued)*

D. The teacher provides frequent and appropriate information to families about the instructional program and conveys information about individual student progress in a culturally sensitive manner. The teacher makes some attempts to engage families in the instructional program.

Level of Performance Answers

- ▶ A. Level 1 (Unsatisfactory)
- ▶ B. Level 2 (Basic)
- ▶ C. Level 4 (Distinguished)
- ▶ D. Level 3 (Proficient)

Any surprises?



Level 3: Proficient Critical Attributes

- ▶ The teacher regularly makes information about the instructional program available.
- ▶ The teacher regularly sends home information about student progress.
- ▶ The teacher develops activities designed to engage families successfully and appropriately in their children's learning.
- ▶ Most of the teacher's communications are appropriate to families' cultural norms.

Level 2: Basic Critical Attributes

- ▶ School- or district-created materials about the instructional program are sent home.
- ▶ The teacher sends home infrequent or incomplete information about the instructional program.
- ▶ The teacher maintains a school-required grade book but does little else to inform families about student progress.
- ▶ Some of the teacher's communications are inappropriate to families' cultural norms.

Level 1: Unsatisfactory Critical Attributes

- ▶ Little or no information regarding the instructional program is available to parents.
- ▶ Families are unaware of their children's progress.
- ▶ Family engagement activities are lacking.
- ▶ There is some culturally inappropriate communication.

Level 4: Distinguished Critical Attributes

In addition to the characteristics of a level of performance 3,

- ▶ Students maintain accurate records about their individual learning progress and frequently share this information with families.
- ▶ Students contribute to regular and ongoing projects designed to engage families in the learning process.
- ▶ All of the teacher's communications are highly sensitive to families' cultural norms.
- ▶ Students regularly develop materials to inform their families about the instructional program.

Level 4: Distinguished Evidence Examples Check

- ▶ Students create materials for Back-to-School Night that outline the approach for learning science.
- ▶ Each student's daily reflection log describes what she or he is learning, and the log goes home each week for review by a parent or guardian.
- ▶ Students design a project on charting their family's use of plastics.

Level 3: Proficient

Evidence Examples Check

- ▶ The teacher sends a weekly newsletter home to families that describes current class activities, community and/or school projects, field trips, etc.
- ▶ The teacher creates a monthly progress report, which is sent home for each student.
- ▶ The teacher sends home a project that asks students to interview a family member about growing up during the 1950s.

Level 2: Basic Evidence Examples Check

- ▶ A parent says, "I received the district pamphlet on the reading program, but I wonder how it's being taught in my child's class."
- ▶ A parent says, "I emailed the teacher about my child's struggles with math, but all I got back was a note saying that he's doing fine."
- ▶ The teacher sends home weekly quizzes for parent or guardian signature.

Level 1: Unsatisfactory Evidence Examples Check

- ▶ A parent says, "I'd like to know what my kid is working on at school."
- ▶ A parent says, "I wish I could know something about my child's progress before the report card comes out."
- ▶ A parent says, "I wonder why we never see any schoolwork come home."

Rubric Level 4

- ▶ The teacher communicates **frequently** with families in a **culturally sensitive** manner, with **students contributing** to the communication.
- ▶ The teacher responds to family concerns with **professional** and **cultural sensitivity**.
- ▶ The teacher's efforts to **engage families** in the instructional program are **frequent and successful**.

Rubric Level 3

- ▶ The teacher provides **frequent** and appropriate information to families about the instructional program and conveys information about individual student progress in a **culturally sensitive** manner.
- ▶ The teacher makes **some attempts** to engage families in the instructional program.

Rubric Level 2

- ▶ The teacher makes **sporadic** attempts to communicate with families about the instructional program and about the progress of individual students but **does not attempt** to engage families in the instructional program.
- ▶ Moreover, the communication that does take place **may not be culturally sensitive** to those families.

Rubric Level 1

- ▶ The teacher provides **little information** about the instructional program to families; the teacher's communication about students' progress is **minimal**.
- ▶ The teacher **does not respond, or responds insensitively**, to parental concerns.

Artifacts

- ▶ Parent letters
- ▶ Handouts
- ▶ Emails
- ▶ Phone logs
- ▶ Blogs
- ▶ Newsletters
- ▶ Any other written communication with parents



Observations

- ▶ These include direct observations of your communication with parents.

Communication

- ▶ Teachers who are strong in this component have a regular communication plan.
- ▶ They use a weekly or biweekly newsletter, blog, or email to communicate about the instructional program and to reach out to parents.
- ▶ They involve students in the communication with parents as well by, for example, inviting students to contribute to the information sent to parents.
- ▶ They understand the cultural community in which they work and work hard to ensure that parents are welcome in the school.

Communication *(continued)*

- ▶ Your communication with parents can take a variety of forms, from informal conversations, newsletters, and blogs to parent nights and conferences.
- ▶ All of these interactions provide potential sources of evidence for this component.
- ▶ In order to be evaluated relative to your performance in component 4c, it is recommended that you keep written records of your communication and parent involvement and that you present these materials for review and discussion with your principal or another evaluator/observer.
- ▶ Your principal may also choose to observe your interactions with parents and collect evidence from direct observation.

Written Records

- ▶ You can provide evidence of your communication with families through written records.
- ▶ When looking at these artifacts, your principal or another evaluator/observer will consider not just the quantity of your communication, but also to what extent you make an effort to involve families in class activities and assignments.
- ▶ For example, you might ask students to interview an older family member, or instruct students to have a family member help them create a graph of their local neighborhood.
- ▶ These types of activities directly involve families in the instructional program.

Written Records *(continued)*

As you collect written records of your communication with families, consider the following aspects:

- ▶ How regularly do you communicate with parents about the instructional program?
- ▶ How regularly do you communicate with parents about individual student progress?
- ▶ To what extent do you engage families in the instructional program?

Written Records *(continued)*

- ▶ What opportunities do you provide for parent participation?
- ▶ How clear is your communication style?
- ▶ Do the parents understand the communication that they receive? How do you know?
- ▶ Do you communicate in a culturally appropriate manner?
- ▶ How do the parents respond to your attempts at communication?

Observations

- ▶ Many teachers interact with parents on a daily basis as they drop off students at school or respond to emails or notes from parents.
- ▶ These interactions are in person and observable.
- ▶ Your principal or another evaluator/observer may use informal observations of your interactions with parents and more formal observations of your meetings or conferences with parents as sources of evidence for this component.

Observations *(continued)*

When observing your formal and/or informal interactions with families, your principal will likely consider the following:

- ▶ The clarity of your communication style
- ▶ Whether or not you communicate in a culturally appropriate manner
- ▶ How parents respond to you
- ▶ How you respond to parents' concerns
- ▶ To what extent you welcome parental involvement and how this is received by the parents.
- ▶ The degree to which students are engaged in the conversations with parents and families

Discussion

- ▶ After reviewing the Performance Levels for **Domain 4c: Communicating with Families**, explain some methods that you use to communicate.
- ▶ Explain some methods that you intend to use to communicate more effectively.

