



Educator Competencies for
Personalized, Learner-Centered Environments

User Guide

Who should use the Educator Competencies and how?

Educator Competencies for Personalized, Learner-Centered Environments

User Guide: Who should use the Educator Competencies and how?

This User Guide is part of a series of supplemental materials and resources created to support schools, districts and states in their implementation of the *Educator Competencies for Personalized, Learner-Centered Environments (2020 Edition)*. Additional materials can be found at <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/ed-comps>.

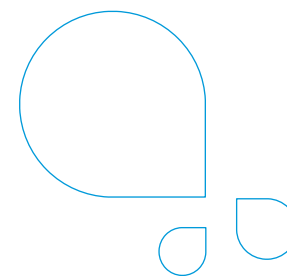
The Purpose of this Tool

The intent of *Educator Competencies for Personalized, Learner-Centered Environments* is to enable a growing number of educators and leaders to implement and scale up a transformation of classrooms into places of personalized, student-centered learning. While individual educators may find the document useful, any significant implementation will need to take place within a professional learning community or academic department, at the least—and ideally, across the whole school and throughout the system.

To support these efforts, the User Guide offers a number of suggestions to encourage use and inspire uptake depending on the educator’s role in the system. Where applicable, the suggestion includes a reference to a specific resource in the online toolkit found at <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/ed-comps>.

Whether working at the classroom, school, district or state level, remember that changing beliefs, establishing antiracist structures and shifting long-held behavioral patterns is deep, time-consuming and worthwhile work. It is always important to:

- » Acknowledge and plan for the time deep-change work entails
- » Embrace the productive struggle and non-linear progress
- » Capitalize on and celebrate small wins and changes to keep up momentum
- » Prepare for and don’t be discouraged by the likely “implementation dip”
- » Gather data to assess, document and highlight progress



How can educators or leaders of a learning community use the Educator Competencies?

Start with the intrapersonal domain.

Begin with the competencies in the intrapersonal domain to ensure individuals start the hard work of change with themselves first.



Go to studentsatthecenterhub.org/ed-comps to filter and print just the intrapersonal competencies.

Crosswalk with standards for teaching.

Teams can generate powerful discussion by examining the Educator Competencies side-by-side with the required teaching standards the network, district or state already uses. Doing so will surface how these competencies build on the solid foundations of good teaching practice, provide opportunity for the learning community to celebrate how much they are already doing, build common language and start to bridge from required standards to defining priorities for a more future-oriented vision of education.



The [Crosswalk of InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#) provides an example of how to do this side-by-side comparison.



**IN THE
FIELD**

Altitude Learning (formerly AltSchools), a school and district support organization, has incorporated the Educator Competencies text in many ways: to help create a common language among their schools and partners; to demonstrate to aspiring learner-centered educators what these teachers are already doing, thereby lessening potential to overwhelm; and to define “learning” and “thinking” for professional development purposes. And in some Altitude Learning lab schools, educators used the Educator Competencies to create simple rubrics for themselves to conduct self-assessments and to track their progress towards meeting the aspirations of the competencies.

Turn competencies into a self-assessment rubric.

The Educator Competencies can be turned into a tool for self-reflection on areas of strength and for development. Such a rubric could be used as a self-assessment tool only, or as a feedback and benchmarking tool, soliciting feedback from a broader group and marking development over time. Results from either approach would inform a cross-functional team as they determine high-priority areas and targeted interventions.



The toolkit includes an [Assessment Tool for Prioritized Competencies](#), [Reflection Tool for Prioritized Competencies](#), and [Directions for Setting Up a Simple Rubric](#).



**IN THE
FIELD**

In supporting the **Jefferson County, Kentucky** schools that are moving to more personalized approaches to learning, coaches and district leaders used the Educator Competencies to create a checklist for coaches to use when observing classrooms. These checklists capture what visitors can expect to see if they walk into classes where teachers are practicing a more personalized approach. Coaches and leaders then used the indicators under the competencies to discuss with teachers which practices still needed to develop and provide examples of how to do so.

Create a cross-functional team charged with facilitating a customized approach to narrow, prioritize and develop a customized learning plan for the learning community.

Build or join a team or coaching structure to help support this work. Together, determine a few focus areas to make the work easier to begin and sustain. Keep in mind, less is more: do not take on the entire set of competencies at once. The team can identify a limited number of themes to tackle each year and the competencies to guide the work and assess outcomes.



Go to <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/ed-comps> to filter and print just the domains, foundational competencies or cross-cutting themes on which the team will focus.



**IN THE
FIELD**

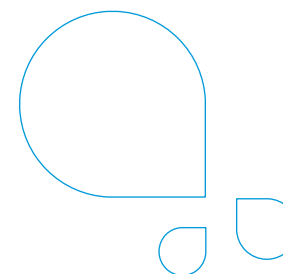
During 2017, **Hartford, Connecticut** district leaders (in partnership with JFF and supported by Nellie Mae Education Foundation) facilitated a series of professional development workshops for principals, coaches and educators as the district moved to adopt the Educator Competencies as part of their teaching standards and integrate with and support other district-wide initiatives.

Use the Educator Competencies and Leadership Competencies for Learner-Centered, Personalized Education together for a year-long community text study.

Ample supplemental resources are available via the appendices in both documents and the linked tools and resources on the digital version of the Educator Competencies.




Access the Leadership Competencies online at <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/resource/leadership-competencies/> and the Educator Competencies tools and resources at <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/ed-comps>.



How can leaders in a district, state or an educator preparation program use the Educator Competencies?

Conduct a crosswalk to refresh existing standards and revise licensure requirements.

Convene conversations of other leaders involved in standards development, educator preparation and evaluation to crosswalk the Educator Competencies with existing state or local standards. Even if few changes are needed to existing standards, these conversations will produce useful insights about the purpose of education, quality of learning and educator support. And where revisions are called for, preparation and evaluation standards and teaching licensure updates should be considered.

 The *Crosswalk of InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards* provides an example of where the conversation might begin.



IN THE FIELD

Vermont recently incorporated the Educator Competencies into its Standards for Teacher and Leadership Preparation Programs. Higher education faculty, registrars, superintendents and other stakeholders then met to discuss ways to incorporate the competencies within their own entities, as well as integrating the framework into the state's Standard.



IN THE FIELD

Arkansas, South Carolina and Virginia each began with their existing Portrait of a Graduate to create a Portrait of an Educator. They cross-walked their student portrait with the Educator Competencies, asking: "How would an educator need to be prepared to help students reach the goals in the graduate portrait?" The state leaders then compared their crosswalks to existing state guidance to determine what would need to be changed, dropped or added.

Use these competencies as a self-assessment rubric.

The Educator Competencies can be a tool for self-reflection on areas of strength and for development. State or district leaders can structure efforts to build context-relevant tools and rubrics for their educator workforces from the samples and self-assessments provided. Educator preparation program leaders can incorporate the Educator Competencies into their teacher preparation assessments.



The toolkit includes an [Assessment Tool for Prioritized Competencies](#), [Reflection Tool for Prioritized Competencies](#), and [Directions for Setting Up a Simple Rubric](#).



IN THE FIELD

When **Arkansas** built their Designing for Innovation Framework, they created a three-part framework consisting of Professional Competencies, Learner-Driven and Transformational Leadership. The Educator Competencies were particularly helpful in informing what to include in the Professional Competencies and Learner-Driven self-assessment sections as the state leaders determined how to customize a model that was right for their state.

Frame and conduct community conversations.

Consider going deep by focusing on one domain at a time over the course of two or three years. Similar to a Portrait of a Graduate effort, this community conversation would describe ideal criteria or "portrait of an educator" for the community educators and elicit opinions and buy-in for a future ready, equitable education system.



Go to <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/ed-comps> to filter and print a single domain.

Revise preparation program curricula.

As districts and states continue to innovate, educator preparation programs and the standards will need to evolve in order to prepare teachers ready to meet new expectations. The Educator Competencies can be used as a guide to where teaching and learning is headed, in order for teacher preparation to foster needed skills and assessments for future educators. Similarly, the text can be used to develop guidance to teacher supervisors and mentors for induction and practicum purposes.



The Directions for Setting Up a Simple Rubric can assist in determining where the preparation program is strong and where it needs to develop.

Create micro-credentials.

Developing micro-credentials aligned to the competencies is an attractive option both for systems that are further along in their learner-centered work that just need to “fine tune,” as well as for those not yet ready to tackle standards or preparation program overhauls. Many organizations and platforms now support means to “home grow” micro-credentials that districts can use to offer continuing education units. And taking it up a notch, micro-credentials can be developed collaboratively between feeder programs and placement districts or included in articulation agreements with leadership development programs.



IN THE FIELD

A group of organizations led by the education design lab **2Revolutions** created a set of personalized learning progressions and building blocks for the LearnNext effort. Compiled in a digital toolbox of free resources, the set includes 30 courses, eight learning progressions and seven playlists—all of which lean heavily, in structure and content, on the Educator Competencies and are designed to complement the Educator Competencies’ efforts.

Design curriculum or modules for educator preparation programs using the same pedagogy.

In addition to revising curricula, preparation programs and professional development approaches would benefit from using the pedagogical approaches described in the competencies. In other words, the Educator Competencies can support an examination not only of the content of teacher preparation but how coursework is delivered. In order for educators to be effective at supporting collaborative, hands-on, competency-based, deep learning that supports student agency, they themselves must experience and learn through those methods.

Use the competencies to support innovation pilots.

Numerous states are experimenting with innovation pilots either through the federal IADA program, state legislation or waivers. The Educator Competencies can be used in numerous ways to support these efforts, including building the competencies into a site-based self-evaluation tool, using them to develop criteria for a school inventory for practicum placement or providing them as background reading to inform pilot developers.



IN THE FIELD

When state leaders in **Arkansas** built their Designing for Innovation Framework to guide schools seeking designation as a School of Innovation, they needed a way to bring together different sets of research to help school leaders understand the kinds of artifacts and evidence to collect. The Educator Competencies served as a primary reference for that research tool. By including alignment to the Educator Competencies in their framework, Arkansas signaled to its schools: “We know there is a strong research basis undergirding the work we’re moving toward...it gives us confidence that when we move into work in this area, it is research-backed.”