

Core Practice Continuums Overview

Purpose

Educational practice and research in developmental science converge on a set of core practices that drive toward an equitable, whole-child approach for all students. These core practices are articulated in Turnaround’s Whole-Child Design Blueprint. Turnaround’s Core Practice Continuums are a set of tools designed to prompt reflection and empower growth across roles in a school by providing rich descriptions of quality and categorically different images of practice across levels.

Audience

The Core Practice Continuums are intended for use by individual educators who engage with students in various ways in a school community, including: **teachers, student support staff, instructional support staff, school leaders and administrators**. See additional considerations for individual and schoolwide use below.

Structure and Function

Each continuum is intentionally framed to show a developmental progression of practice and pathways to improvement. While rubrics are a commonly used assessment tool in education spaces, the table below highlights key distinctions between the functions of rubrics and continuums.

A rubric ...	A continuum ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can be used for planning, implementing, reflecting and assessing ○ Serves as a summative measure of quality at a specific point in time ○ Is a linear tool specific to each cycle, used to assess achievement at a certain point in time, based on several specific criteria ○ Is an evaluation/summative tool primarily used to measure an expected outcome ○ Descriptors reflect a range of abilities from poor to proficient ○ Describes levels of achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can be used for planning, implementing, reflecting, and assessing ○ Is for self-assessment and reflection ○ Serves as an indicator of how educators can move forward in the practices, examining their existing actions and experiences ○ Has descriptors of quality; often uses categorical differences, rather than changes in frequency across levels ○ Descriptors are accompanied by ideas and pathways to help educators move forward and improve ○ Reflects a developmental view

When reading across each continuum, development of a practice is shown through **Emerging, Developing, and Advanced** levels of quality:

- At the **Emerging** level, indicators articulate the implications of practice that is not consistent, not uniform, or not grounded in a shared commitment and understanding across the school. This level often showcases common challenges and pitfalls related to the practice, including those that occur even when adults are trying to make good faith efforts. Descriptors at this level can help educators interrogate bias, align to developmental research, and consider the impact that the absence of structures or support can have on the practice.
- At the **Developing** level, indicators may describe how a practice may be inconsistent or partial in the sense that there is evidence of both Emerging and Advanced structures or practices. Often at this level, structures, adult skills, or student experiences are approaching high quality, but equity and inclusion are missing or execution of a practice at the Advanced level is not true for diverse groups of students. This level reflects developing, but not universal, adult buy-in about a particular practice, and the framing offers ideas to develop the practice, pointing to how to get from “here to there.”
- At the **Advanced** level, indicators paint a picture of what happens when high-quality practice is in place and all students experience that practice. At the Advanced level, there is schoolwide consensus around the practice and the structures that support development of the practice. For many practices, Advanced indicates that the school functions as a learning organization that engages in continuous reflection and growth.

Additional Considerations for Use

As educators engage with a Core Practice continuum in different contexts, consider the following:

- ✓ **Remember that the continuum categories are porous.** This means that elements of your practice may be in different levels of development for different areas. For example, an educator's practice may look "Advanced" for Activating Background Knowledge but still in "Emerging" for Reflecting on Language Learning.
- ✓ **Remember that the continuum is recursive;** it needs to be revisited and reconsidered as you adjust your practice and progress.

Applying the lens of an individual educator:

For several continuums, the Advanced level describes what the practice looks like when it happens schoolwide. An individual teacher may not feel they have a window into how this practice looks for all educators in the building. In this case, consider:

- ✓ Is there shared agreement across the school on what is meant by a specific practice and what it looks like?
- ✓ What opportunities are available for shared ownership and collective growth in the identified area (e.g., peer learning, observation, resource sharing)?
- ✓ What type of coaching or professional development is needed to advance your practice?

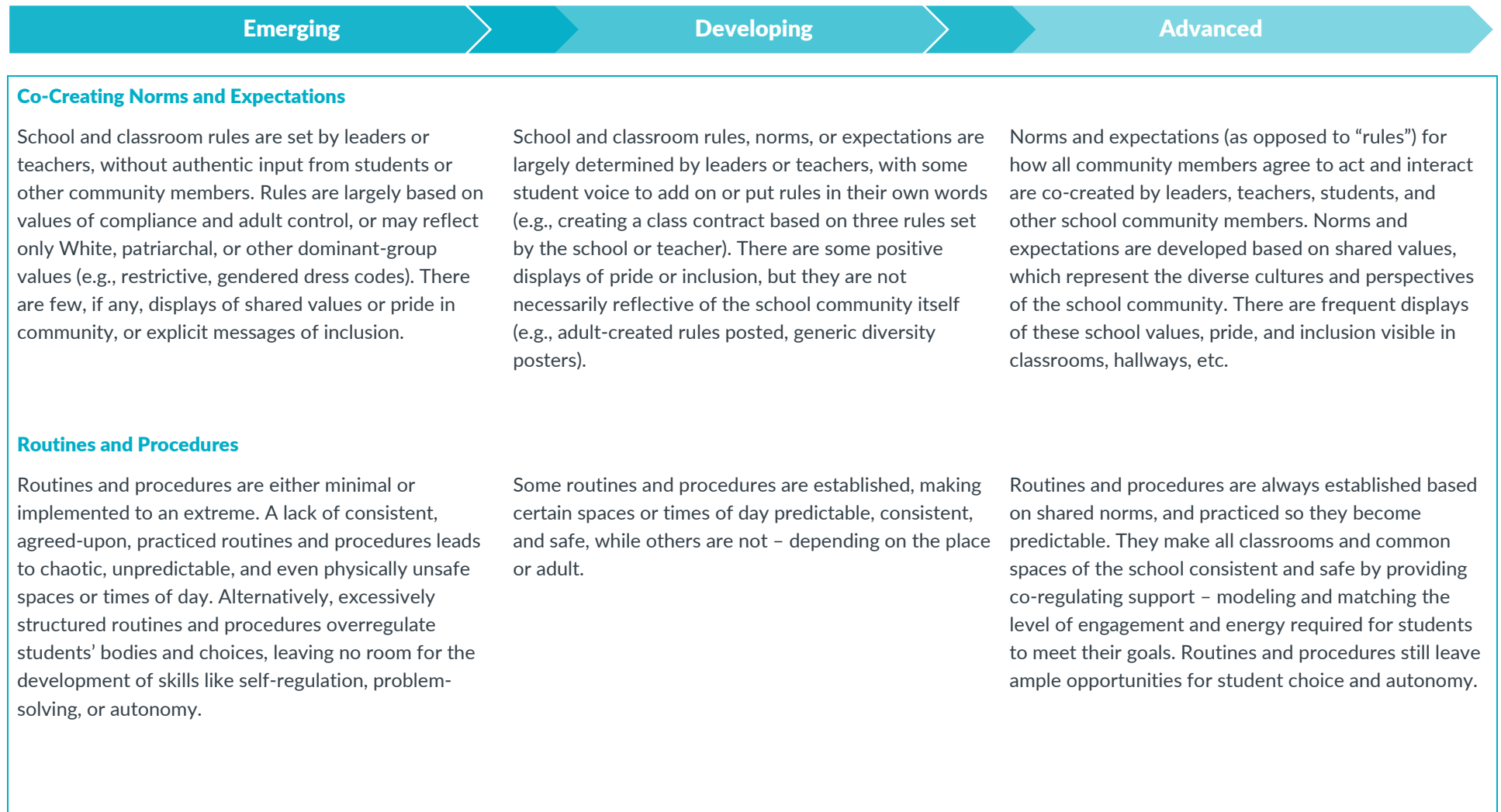
Applying the lens of a school leader:

Although the continuum is geared toward individual educator practice and reflection, some continuums explicitly signal the importance of an integrated schoolwide perspective and commitment. Leaders utilizing the continuums should consider the implications of all the layers that go into supporting quality practice across a school. They can do this by applying a lens of leadership in addition to reflecting on their own individual practice. Some ways to do this are:

- ✓ Consider how you, as a leader, embody and explicitly model the skills, mindsets, and practices present in the continuums.
- ✓ At the "Advanced" level, look for indicators of the practice happening beyond any one individual's practice, such as: "*happens almost always,*" "*demonstrated by all adults,*" "*is the experience of all students.*" If there are large inconsistencies for a practice, consider whether you are proactively creating the context and conditions for *all* staff to be able to demonstrate that skill or engage in that practice.
- ✓ Consider what **Inclusive Leadership** looks like: Is there shared agreement across the school on what is meant by a specific practice and what it looks like?
- ✓ Consider the role of **Staff Relationships & Collaboration**: Is there a culture of collaborative learning for the staff connected to this practice? Do all staff feel empowered to identify common problems of practice and propose solutions that move the whole school toward improvement?
- ✓ Think about **Capacity Building**: Do you see the development of the skills, practices, and mindsets captured in the continuum as an ongoing process and as one of your main leadership responsibilities? Have you worked collaboratively to build a strong, shared commitment to a point of view/expectations/understanding of these practices with staff? What opportunities do you see to provide coaching or professional development around a specific practice area?

Core Practice Continuum: Expectations, Norms and Routines

Co-created expectations, norms and routines which represent the diverse perspectives and shared values of the larger school community, setting the stage for safety and belonging.



Norms for Celebrating Students and Staff

Acknowledging or celebrating students or adults is rare, inconsistent, or not done. When it happens, compliance with rules and performance is praised (e.g., perfect attendance or top test scores) over effort or contributions to the community.

Some students and adults are celebrated and acknowledged for their effort or contributions to the community, along with praise for compliance with rules and performance.

All students and adults are regularly celebrated and acknowledged for their effort and growth, demonstration of shared values, unique strengths and assets, etc.

Response to Community Conflict

When community culture and trust are damaged because rules are broken, there is not a clear or accessible process for adults and students to repair relationships. Instead, there are only disciplinary actions, or the issue is ignored.

When community culture and trust are damaged because norms are violated, there are some efforts by adults to repair relationships and address the root cause of the issue. This process may be inconsistent or only effective some of the time.

When community culture and trust are damaged because norms are violated, there are consistent processes for students and adults to hold each other accountable, address the root cause of the issue, problem-solve together, and repair relationships. All staff, students, and families have an avenue to raise a community issue and have it taken seriously and addressed.