TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN

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 for Children'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 ...
○ 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 ○ Has descriptors that reflect a range of abilities from poor to proficient ○ Describes levels of achievement	○ 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 ○ Has descriptors that 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.

TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN

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 "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 continuums are 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 include:

- ✓ 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?

TURNAROUND FOR CHILDREN

Core Practice Co-Regulatory and Restorative Practices

Responses to conflict, dysregulation, or breaking agreed-upon norms that seek to address root causes and create resolution by building skills, maintaining safety, trust and belonging, and empowering both the individual and community.

Emerging	Developing	Advanced
Shared Goals (for Responding to Conflict or Challenging Behavior)		
The general mindset among leaders and staff is that students should be punished for breaking rules (*"otherwise there will be chaos," "that is the only way they will learn," etc.*). It is the adults' responsibility to keep their classrooms under control and address misbehavior, and the perception is that conflict or challenges are a sign of adult failure. The goals for responding to conflict or challenging student behavior are getting students to follow rules, keeping things "in control" at all times, and maintaining physical safety (*but not necessarily emotional safety*) and respect for adults (*but not necessarily for students*).	The general mindset among leaders and staff is that there should be predictable, logical consequences for students breaking rules, in order to maintain safety and fairness. It is the adults' responsibility to keep their classrooms safe and address students' challenging behavior, conflict and needs. The goals for responding to conflict or challenging student behavior are safety and belonging – but some classrooms may be focused more on getting compliance, whereas others' goals may be to promote students' agency and ownership of the community.	The general mindset among leaders and staff is that when conflicts arise or shared norms and expectations are broken, they should be addressed in a way that maintains and/or repairs trust and relationships. Conflict and challenges are seen as important, predictable experiences and opportunities for growth. It is the shared responsibility of adults to guide students in building the skills to express themselves, take accountability, and advocate for what they need. The goals for responding to conflict or challenging student behavior (across all classrooms) are to build and maintain a safe, inclusive community by responding to needs, conflict, etc. with supports, consequences and opportunities for acknowledging and repairing harm.
Proactive and In-The-Moment Support		
There are no clearly defined opportunities for students to proactively seek support for conflicts or challenges they are having. Alternatively, students may know how to raise an issue but are not confident they will be kept safe or supported to resolution.	There are opportunities for students to proactively seek out conflict resolution or address challenges, and they are sometimes used, although there may be issues of trust (*e.g., a peer mediation program exists, but confidentiality is not always kept*). Some students have	Proactive avenues to seek out conflict resolution or address issues are available to all school community members (*e.g., available guidance counselors or school psychologists, peer mediation, community meetings, etc.*). Students are clear on how to access these supports,

When challenges or conflict arise, adults often struggle to provide co-regulatory support – exacerbating the situation through their own escalating tone, volume, provocations, intensifying consequences, etc. Adults may construe cultural differences in communication or students' emotions as misbehavior (*e.g., reprimanding a student for expressing frustration "the wrong way"*), instead of understanding, acknowledging and validating them.

relationships with adults where they feel comfortable asking for help directly.

When challenges or conflicts arise, some adults are able to provide co-regulatory support for students, while others struggle. As a result, students experience inconsistent support.

feel comfortable reporting, and have faith that school will keep them safe and help seek resolution.

Adults (both proactively and in a moment of challenge) provide co-regulatory support – modeling and scaffolding through their own tone, volume, body language, verbal prompts, etc. Adults use their understanding of how culture shapes communication, along with their knowledge of the school community, to avoid their own bias affecting how a student is supported or reprimanded. Students are never punished for their emotions – instead, they are acknowledged and validated, even if there will be an accountability conversation that follows *(e.g., "I see that you're frustrated – working in a group can be really hard. Instead of yelling at your partners, let's …")*.

Consequences and Restoration

Discipline procedures are either highly subjective or so rigid that they do not allow for consideration of the specific student, circumstances, or what will best support the school community (*e.g., "no excuses" policies*). Students rarely receive additional support following a challenging incident. Consequences are often punitive, exclusionary, or intentionally public shaming (*e.g., being sent out of the classroom, in- or out-of-school suspensions*). This may often result in inequitable treatment of students based on implicit or explicit biases around race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, language, etc.

Students are not given authentic opportunities to take or ask for accountability, so relationships remain damaged, the impact of the incident is not addressed, and trust and community are eroded.

A predetermined set of guidelines for logical consequences may be in place, with the intention of creating predictability and fairness. Some students may experience the same challenges and consequences many times before additional action is taken to get to the "root cause" of the issue.

There are sometimes opportunities for students to take accountability and repair relationships or community (*e.g., writing an apology letter*). This is usually focused on actions and experience of the "rule breaker" – not others impacted.

Challenging behaviors and/or conflicts are seen as symptoms, and there is shared commitment to getting to root causes, which might include skill or relationship building, a change in the environment or adult actions, support for getting to resolution, etc. Consequences are logical and follow a set of guidelines predetermined by the community (including families and caregivers), but with room for consideration of the specific circumstances. Adults' ongoing work of reflection and learning around issues of identity and culture (*e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, language*) ensure implicit or explicit biases do not interfere with students' being treated equitably in these processes.

Students always have the opportunity to take accountability for their actions (and ask for accountability from others), which is treated as a way

		to restore trust and relationships, not as public shaming. This process focuses on giving voice and resolution to all those impacted.
Adult Capacity Building and Collaboration		
Adults often struggle to manage challenging situations, and they do not regularly receive collaborative support or capacity building on these skills. This may be exacerbated by a lack of capacity-building opportunities around culturally affirming and sustaining practices, which contribute to implicit or explicit biases affecting responses to challenges with students. Adults may frequently defer to others to "handle" challenging student behavior, which may be ineffective and/or harmful (*e.g., unnecessarily criminalizing student behavior by involving a school-based police officer*).	Some adults have the skills to manage challenging situations, while others may struggle. There may be some capacity-building or collaborative support, but it might not be ongoing or highly effective (*e.g., a single training on de-escalation*).	All adults have the skills to manage conflict and/or challenging situations, and they effectively leverage additional support as needed (*e.g., bringing in a school mental health professional or another trusted adult*). All staff members receive regular capacity-building and collaborative support on these skills (*e.g., trainings, peer observations, feedback and coaching*), coupled with the opportunity to do critical reflection and learning on the role of culture and identity in these practices. Staff at all levels regularly review data to ensure equitable implementation of supports and/or consequences to mitigate bias based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, language, etc.