THE LEARNING TRIFECTA CONTINUUMS

The Learning Trifecta Continuums were designed to ground educators in what we are truly trying to accomplish through the integration of teacher clarity, student discussion, and high-level questioning. Each continuum provides a clear visual and descriptive pathway for understanding what implementation looks like at varying levels from emerging practice to deep, student-driven learning. Rather than serving as an evaluation tool, these continuums act as a mirror for reflection, helping educators and teams identify where their current practices fall and where they can intentionally grow next

Grounded in empirical education research, the continuums illustrate the shift from teacher-centered to student-empowered learning environments. They emphasize the movement from compliance to cognition and transition from students doing the work of remembering to students engaging in the work of reasoning, analyzing, questioning, and constructing understanding. Each dimension, teacher clarity, student discussion, and high-level questioning, represents a critical component of rigorous and equitable instruction. Together, they define what high-impact learning looks and sounds like in action.

By articulating specific indicators of growth, the continuums provide a shared language for teachers, professional learning communities, instructional coaches, and leaders. They allow educators to analyze practice, collect evidence during learning walks, and engage in collaborative reflection around instructional impact. Over time, these continuums become a common reference point for measuring and monitoring implementation, celebrating progress, and designing targeted support that deepens student learning.

Ultimately, The Learning Trifecta Continuums remind us that meaningful change doesn't occur through compliance or isolated strategies. It grows through reflection, clarity, and deliberate practice. When educators use these continuums as tools for planning, conversation, feedback, or goal setting, they not only enhance their craft but also amplify students' ownership, agency, and voice in learning.

TEACHER CLARITY

Teacher Clarity Continuum			
1	2	3	4
Identifies basic components of teacher clarity. Unpacks standards for skills and concepts. Determines general levels of rigor but may not yet link them to learning design. Creates learning intentions and success criteria aligned to skills and concepts in standards, but they are primarily for teacher use (curriculum map, lesson plans, etc.).	Creates learning intentions and success criteria aligned to skills and concepts and makes them accessible in the classroom. Aligns lessons to learning intentions and success criteria, but student engagement with learning intentions and success criteria is not present. Communicates learning intentions and success criteria to students.	Plans for student interaction with learning intentions and success criteria throughout the lesson. Regularly collects student voice to gauge student clarity and understanding. Uses learning intentions and success criteria to identify potential student misconceptions. Uses learning intentions and success criteria to determine scaffolds or differentiation.	Facilitates regular student interaction with learning intentions and success criteria via multiple modalities (self-assessment, goal setting, pre/post knowledge) Uses learning intentions and success criteria to progress monitor student learning and adjust instruction. Provides feedback explicitly linked to learning intentions and success criteria

Teacher Clarity via Student Voice Continuum			
	1	**2**	**3**
What are you learning? *(learning intention)*	1. Student is unable to articulate what they are learning or only reference a task or activity.	2. Student articulates what they are learning (articulates the learning intention).	3. Student articulates what they are learning and how it connects to the learning task or activity.
Why are you learning it?	1. Student is unable to articulate a why for their learning or gives no response.	2. Student articulates a why for their learning that is connected to their learning task.	3. Student articulates a why for their learning that is connected to a larger context than the current task.
How will you know you've learned it? *(success criteria)*	1. Student is unable to articulate how they will be successful, gives no response, or references the teacher telling them or a grade.	2. Student articulates how they will be successful by referring or speaking to the success criteria.	3. Student articulates how they will be successful by referring or speaking to the success criteria and links it to their current learning task.

STUDENT DISCUSSION

Student Discussion Continuum			
1	2	3	4
Student discussion is primarily teacher-directed and centers on brief responses, retelling or restating information. Students contribute ideas individually but do not reference or build on the thinking of others. Use of academic or discipline-specific vocabulary is limited.	Students participate in structured exchanges that include explaining ideas, offering examples, or responding to prompts from the teacher. Students provide explanations or evidence of their thinking and respond to their peers' contributions. Students begin to add on to the thinking of classmates when contributing to discussion.	Students engage in sustained exchanges with peers that include interpreting information, evaluating ideas, and supporting claims with evidence of content-specific topics. Students support their ideas with evidence-based explanations and reference prior contributions, extend lines of reasoning, and respond directly to one another's thinking. The teacher monitors and supports the quality and direction of discussion while students carry majority of the conversational work.	Student dialogue becomes a collaborative process through which students clarify concepts, refine interpretations, and deepen understanding together. Students contribute to extending the content and help explain and build upon concepts to their classmates. Students ensure that all voices are heard and respect the opinions of others. Students lead the discussion and independently engaging in dialogue about the topic.

HIGH-LEVEL QUESTIONING

High-Level Questioning Continuum			
1	2	3	4
Students respond primarily to questions that ask them to recall information, identify details, or restate ideas from instruction or text. Opportunities for students to pose their own questions are limited or absent. Participation is uneven among students; not all students are required to respond.	Students respond to questions that support understanding of concepts and processes, Students occasionally ask questions to clarify expectations, procedures, or content. Questioning reflects a range of thinking demands, but participation is not yet consistently expected from all learners.	Students fully explain their reasoning, compare ideas, interpret evidence, and justify conclusions in response to questions that extend beyond comprehension. Students are provided opportunities to intentionally generate questions that demonstrate rigorous independent thinking. Questioning progressions are intentionally structured to increase cognitive challenge and include expectations for full student participation.	Students independently pose questions that probe assumptions, extend interpretations, and invite multiple perspectives on the learning. Students respond to peer-generated questions by refining their thinking, supporting claims with evidence, and reconsidering ideas when appropriate. Questions are intentionally designed to provoke cognitive challenge, promote deep reasoning, and extend conceptual thinking; all students are required to engage and respond.