



Mastery Charter Schools- Instructional Standards 2011-2012

What are the Instructional Standards?

The Instructional Standards are a compilation of fundamental best teaching practices, successful teacher traits and common measures of student success. Each standard is designed to create an objective-driven, rigorous and effective classroom experience that will serve to prepare students for higher education, the global economy and the pursuit of their dreams. The standards have been distilled from a wide variety of resources such as Madeline Hunter's Mastery Teaching, Harry Wong's First Days of Teaching, The Skillful Teacher by Saphier and Grower, Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov and work by many high performing charter schools and teacher training institutions.

How are the Instructional Standards Organized?

Instructional Standards	1. Objective Driven Approach
	2. Expectations and Accountability
	3. Instruction
	4. Student Motivation
	5. Rigorous Engagement

There are 5 Standards: Each standard is followed by a series of strands that are subdivided into *Student Outcomes* and *Teacher Actions*. *Student Outcomes* convey the expected result of successful routine implementation of the standard. *Teacher Actions* convey the requisite implementation practices for the standard. Each strand is described at a proficient level. A description of outstanding is included for each standard. Under select *Teacher Actions* suggested strategies are bulleted. Further explanation regarding these suggested strategies can be found within the Mastery Charter Instructional Guidebook. **During the 2011-12 school year, we are piloting a 6th standard, Advanced Instruction, with Advanced and Master teachers.**

How are the Instructional Standards used?

Teachers are encouraged to routinely reflect on their practice in light of the Instructional Standards. The standards provide a common language and expectation to facilitate peer and administrative observations as well as coaching and professional development. At the student level, the standards serve to create a common instructional experience across classes by instituting valuable rituals and strategies.

Classroom Observations:

During observations, success is measured by comparing teacher and student actions against the practices described in the Instructional Standards. During formal observations, each category is separately rated. An overall observation rating is also provided. **The overall rating is not an average but rather a determination of the degree to which all categories were delivered with success.** The following describes the category and overall rating systems for formal observations.

	Individual Standard Rating System	Overall Observation Rating System
Unsatisfactory:	The integrity of the standard was not maintained. The standard is an area of considerable concern. Typically, three or more strands were not observed at the proficient level.	One or more standards were rated unsatisfactory.
Developing:	The integrity of the standard was insufficiently maintained. The standard is an area of some concern. Typically, two or fewer strands were not observed at the proficient level.	All standards were rated at least developing.
Proficient:	The integrity of the standard was maintained. The standard is not an area of concern. Typically, most or all strands were observed at the proficient level.	All standards were rated at least proficient.
Advanced:	All strands were observed when appropriate and delivered in an exemplary fashion. Several qualities described in the "outstanding" description were observed.	All standards were rated at least proficient with four or more standards rated advanced or outstanding.
Outstanding:	All strands were observed when appropriate and delivered in an exemplary fashion. Most qualities described in the "outstanding" description were observed. The spirit of the standard was raised to new heights.	All standards were rated at least advanced with three or more standards rated outstanding.

Objective Driven Approach		Mastery classrooms are objective-driven! Instruction and daily routines serve to meet measurable objectives in an efficient and urgent manner. Content and skills taught are prioritized by the curriculum and student data. Success is determined at the end of every lesson. Objective- Instruction- Assessment. We're focused!...Super focused!	
		proficient	outstanding
STRANDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	Objective Mastery	All students display evidence of significant progress towards or mastery of the objective.
		Objective Focused	Students understand and maintain focus on the objective throughout the lesson. When asked by an observer, students are able to accurately describe what they are doing, the purpose of their learning, and provide evidence of mastery of the objective.
	TEACHER ACTIONS	3M Objective	The objective conveys what a student will learn, not solely what they will do. Objective is written with a Measurable verb , contains Manageable and attainable content and skills for a single lesson, and is the Most important next step in reaching the week, semester, report period or year long goal and advancing on the path to college.
		Objective Conveyed	The objective(s) is introduced to students at the start of class and continually reinforced throughout the lesson. Objective is tied to broader goal and purpose.
		Driving Objective	The objective(s) serve as the overt driving force of the lesson. Minimum of 75% of lesson time is allocated to directly addressing lesson objective(s). DI, GP and IP directly reinforce the objective. Background information and supportive review are limited to less than 25% of the lesson.
		Checking For Understanding	Teacher frequently and strategically checks for understanding to gain an authentic picture of student learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whole Questioning</i> • <i>Wait Time</i> • <i>Scanning</i> • <i>Strategic Sampling</i>
		Adjusting Instruction	When planning does not adequately predict the pace and level of student understanding, teacher makes in-the-moment changes. If students are quickly mastering material, teacher increases the speed or rigor of instruction. Alternatively, a gap in mastery is quickly and readily addressed by strategic reteaching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pinpoint</i> • <i>Small Group</i> • <i>Speed Up</i> • <i>Repeat</i> • <i>New Approach</i>
Objective Assessment	By the end of class, students are assessed to determine their success in meeting the objective and/or progressing towards a larger class goal. The objective assessment confirms that the objective was met at an appropriately rigorous level of mastery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exit Slip</i> • <i>IP Class wide Scanning</i> • <i>All Response</i> • <i>IP Teacher Tracking</i> 		
		Instruction focuses on a rigorous learning objective(s) that was expertly designed and selected to meet the needs of the students and serve the school goals. Students and teacher connect the lesson objective with future larger goals. The cycle of objective- instruction- assessment is implemented with integrity. The teacher is highly in tune with the students' experience and is very aware of what is being learned and who is learning it. Checking for understanding is constant, efficient and inclusive of all students. Teacher expertly addresses student misunderstandings and misconceptions. Rapid student mastery of the objective results in the teacher pushing students to a higher and more complex level of the objective. Students are informed and invested in the changes in pace and rigor. Throughout the lesson, students are keenly aware of the purpose of the lesson and how content/skills will be acquired and assessed. Progress is apparent and conveys inevitable success. The objective(s) pervades all aspects of instruction. Homework, posters, worksheets... all communication is centered around and focused on the objective(s). Assessment confirms that an instructionally transformative experience occurred for all students.	

Expectations and Accountability		The classroom is a community that thrives on common, conveyed, and consistent expectations. Student actions such as entering, answering questions, note-taking, and communicating with peers reflect an efficient, orderly, and purposeful culture. Teacher's actions and classroom environment reflect well established routines and systems of response. When expectations are not met, consistent and communicated consequences are applied.	
		proficient	outstanding
STRANDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	Ready to Learn	100% of students are prepared and ready to learn. The students' body language conveys buy-in. They are properly uniformed and prepared with the correct instructional materials, books, pens, etc. Distractions such as bags, food, beverages, electronics, etc. are out of sight.
		Follow Procedures	Upon entering, students start working with minimal verbal prompting. Throughout the lesson, students follow well established routines and rituals.
		On Task	Throughout the lesson, 100% of students are actively on task, displaying academic posture and maintaining appropriate focus. When prompted, students immediately follow teacher directives.
	TEACHER ACTIONS	Board	The agenda board is prominently displayed, organized, informative, and contains greeting, date, objective, and other grade appropriate information. Information is complete, updated daily and addresses the current class. Agenda board and general board work font is visible from all student seats.
		Routines	Predetermined classroom procedures regarding instructional routines, materials organization, and student behavior are consistently reviewed, retaught and enforced in an effort to increase efficiency and maintain discipline.
		Strong Presence	Teacher's presence is commanding, respectful and purpose-driven. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Economy of Language</i> • <i>One Voice</i> • <i>Stay on Track</i> • <i>Face and Focus</i> • <i>Calm Before the Storm</i> • <i>Registers</i>
		Sweat It All	Posture, uniform and other nondisruptive yet non-compliant issues are readily addressed. The bar is set high and maintained.
		Clear Directions	Directions regarding student actions and behavior are frequent, clear, specific, sequential and observable. Directions are often communicated both verbally and visually. Directions regarding student behavior focus on what to do rather than what not to do.
		Redirection	Students exhibiting inappropriate/off task behavior are quickly and consistently addressed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proximity</i> • <i>Group Reminder</i> • <i>Anonymous Reminder</i> • <i>Signaling</i> • <i>Quick Word</i> • <i>Quick Public Correction</i> • <i>Consequence</i>
		The classroom runs like a well-oiled machine. From the minute they enter, all students are intensely engaged in academics with no teacher prompting. Routines, rituals and strong organization serve to maximize time and increase achievement. Student actions and behaviors are the result of positive well-rehearsed procedures and significant student buy-in. Teacher prompting is replaced by positive ingrained student habit. The agenda board informs students and maintains teacher-student alignment. The physical environment is expertly used to support instruction and reinforce expectations. No opportunity is missed. Teacher directed systems positively influence student organization regarding note-taking, daily planning, materials maintenance, etc. The classroom, students and teacher create a refreshing, inviting, and highly efficient feel. Misbehaviors are rare and, when occur, are systematically and consistently addressed and always with confidence and respect. The bar for student behavior is high and never provides room for off-task behavior. Student behaviors reflect the teacher's high expectations.	

Instruction		Effective instruction means all students learn. Great lessons are focused and responsive. Instruction provides the modeling, guidance and practice required for students to meet the objective. Students are engaged and challenged. Instruction results in students' ability to independently demonstrate skill and/or content knowledge. Mastery teachers believe in the transformative power of instruction!	
		proficient	outstanding
STRANDS	TEACHER ACTIONS	Opening	The opening is 10 minutes or less and includes a 'do now' and a lesson introduction. A 'do now' is utilized as a key instructional strategy to review prior content and/or prepare students for the lesson ahead. The lesson introduction includes reviewing the agenda, introducing the objective, and activating prior knowledge.
		Direct Instruction	Instructor delivers information needed for students to meet lesson objective. Direct instruction succinctly and efficiently models learning/cognitive process and expected student end products. Direct instruction proactively addresses likely student misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding the objective. Students are held accountable to engaging during DI.
		Guided Practice	Instructor provides opportunity for all students to practice new learning while under direct supervision and in collaboration with the instructor. Throughout guided practice, the teacher increasingly releases the cognitive load to the students.
		Independent Practice	A significant amount of time in class is reserved for students to actively practice part or all of the objective. Students practice the objective frequently and in different contexts. Full release of responsibility is experienced.
		Closing	A clear and distinct lesson closing solidifies student understanding and prepares them for upcoming lessons. The closing includes a review of key ideas, a final check for understanding, and a preview of upcoming concepts.
		Pacing	Each objective and/or lesson portion is allocated an appropriate amount of time. The time provided is efficient, focused, and serves to reinforce that every minute is used for learning time. The lesson is paced to ensure bell to bell instruction.
		Accessibility	Lesson materials and teacher instructional approaches are differentiated to ensure 100% of students can access the content and meet the lesson objective.
		Homework	Assigned homework is robust, purposeful, and age appropriate. Homework is provided at the students' independent work level and focuses on review and the practice of confirmed learned skills. Homework is not used to introduce new content/skills. Homework is assigned every day in every class.
		Independent student success is the goal and it is achieved. The opening serves as a key instructional activity that both spirals the most important material and prepares students for the upcoming content. Modeling provides clear guidelines for success and GP addresses misconceptions and struggles. Efficient and clear communication results in desired student actions. Instruction supports full release of responsibility during independent practice. Examples, models and practice assignments are highly purposeful in design and confirm the students' ability to transfer skill from one scenario to multiple other scenarios. Teachers are nimble with the model, adjusting the length and order of DI, GP, IP to most effectively meet the intended objective. Student concerns and pitfalls have been forecast and resources have been proactively put in place to facilitate student independence. Reliance on handouts, teacher guidance and visuals is evident as a necessary intermediate step but never an end goal. Instruction is rich and dense, filled with experiences that are precisely aligned to the objective. Instruction is differentiated in response to assessment and other data sources. Academic visual aids are exemplary in function and presentation. The lesson closing is dynamic and designed to promote student retention of the content. Homework provides multiple and varied experiences to practice and develop content knowledge and skills.	

Student Motivation		Mastery teachers motivate their students to greatness! Student engagement sets the stage for quality instruction. Direct communication, relationships and proactive/reactive strategies are consistently employed to motivate and require active participation in the lesson. High expectations are matched by equally high support and positive student-teacher rapport. The ship is sailing and everyone is on board! Ahoy!		
		proficient	outstanding	
STRANDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	Student Drive	Students display a sense of organized urgency throughout the lesson. Students are using time productively, work quickly, and are invested in meeting teacher expectations efficiently. When students complete the work at hand, they willingly engage in other productive work.	
	TEACHER ACTIONS	Engaging Approach	The teacher conveys a true sense of excitement about the content, skill, or assignment. Teacher uses age and school appropriate strategies to draw in students and give credence to the lesson and required material.	The students' persistence, determination, and dedication to their achievement is clear. 100% of students are participating and actively engaged in the lesson. Students have a laserlike focus on the daily objective and broader student achievement goals. Students take significant responsibility for their learning and the learning of their classmates. The teacher cultivates a pervasive message of hard work and academic grit. The teacher is investing every student in his/her ability to succeed, thereby building intrinsic motivation. Displays of student work are recent, exemplary, and serve to push the bar higher and reinforce the notion that hard work equals success. Dynamic and utilized public tracking systems conveniently assist the students and teacher in determining progress and maintaining focus on the goals. Teacher reinforcement and motivating strategies focus on raising the bar, not merely meeting it. Motivational strategies are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. The teacher builds a classroom culture that reflects a team urgently driving towards ambitious collective academic achievement. Instructional time is clearly precious and valued. Every teacher action is purposeful, necessary, and efficient to convey a sense of urgency. Students and teachers believe they can achieve great things and are doing everything possible to do so.
		Hard Work Message	The message that hard work equals success is systematically communicated through a variety of visual and verbal classroom outlets. Teacher-student interactions, explicit expectations, student work displays, recognition of student achievement, and public tracking systems are designed to reinforce hard work, academic grit, high expectations, and personal responsibility. • <i>Speak Success and Challenge</i> • <i>Role Models</i> • <i>Objective Tracking</i> • <i>Wall Messaging</i> • <i>Explicit Lessons</i> • <i>Reward effort</i>	
		Team Culture	The teacher actively develops a culture of teamwork, support, risk taking, and collective responsibility. Teacher promotes and reinforces positive and respectful student-student interactions. Visuals and teacher communication clearly convey the cohort's branded identity, recent successes, and yearly goals. • <i>Classroom Theme</i> • <i>Class Goals</i> • <i>Competition</i> • <i>Student Awards</i> • <i>Student Jobs</i> • <i>Class Wide Incentives</i> • <i>Cheers</i> • <i>Professional Peer Interactions</i>	
		Reinforcement	Praise and encouragement are presented in multiple and sincere forms. A positive tone permeates the lesson. A minimum ratio of 3 positive comments to 1 negative comment is employed. • <i>Assume the best</i> • <i>Narrate the positive</i> • <i>Pointed Praise</i> • <i>Student work display</i>	
		Rapport	The teacher displays positive, professional, academically focused relationships with all students and consistently models appropriate communication skills.	
		Urgency	The teacher explicitly increases students' sense of urgency to complete tasks, learn material, and succeed in school. The teacher ensures activities and student interactions are focused on the goal at hand and not on unrelated information and material. 'Down Time' is avoided. • <i>Rationale</i> • <i>Time It</i> • <i>Count Down</i> • <i>How Close</i> • <i>Minimal Transitions</i> • <i>Delay Interruption</i>	

Rigorous Engagement		Challenge is the name of the game! Mastery teachers know that instructional time is best utilized when students are reaching for that next rung on the ladder. Rigorous student engagement means academic sweat. This isn't a maintenance workout. We're always stepping it up! Students are constantly facing new challenges along with the opportunities to practice and the motivation to be successful.		
		proficient	outstanding	
STRANDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	Cognitive Engagement	Students are carrying a significant portion of the cognitive load throughout all parts of the lesson.	All students are being challenged and working hard throughout the lesson. Students are thoughtfully interacting and responding to the content by both asking high level questions and responding to teacher inquiries with complete sentences and complex responses. The lesson, from design to execution, is characterized by rigor. The objective is ambitious yet still met with success. The teacher, skillfully challenges students without frustrating or demotivating them. The lesson is made instructionally dense by taking advantage of opportunities to engage students and push the majority of the cognitive work onto their plates. When questioning/engaging students, the teacher, consistently and effectively asks for more. Less than excellent responses are seen as opportunities for further engagement. High order questioning is frequent and exemplary. The bar is high and the pervasive message is- we must reach it.
		High Level Response	The majority of student responses (both verbal and written) require students to accurately apply knowledge, make connections, or otherwise think to achieve the answer. Students' answers utilize academic language and complete thoughts. Students are not merely guessing answers or reading from notes and posters.	
		Participating	≥95% of students are actively participating in and contributing to the lesson, appropriately engaging the instructor and/or peers, and playing a non-passive role in the class.	
	TEACHER ACTIONS	Instructional Density	Focused and instructionally dense activities are chosen over less efficient activities. All facets of the lesson are designed to push students to work, engage, and think. All academic expectations provide a sincere challenge and are one step above students' ability.	
		Grabbing Engagement	Teacher constantly exploits opportunities to pass on the cognitive load to students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thinking Notes</i> • <i>Puppetting</i> • <i>What's Next</i> • <i>Stopping Short</i> • <i>Choral Response</i> • <i>Non Verbal Response</i> • <i>Everybody Writes</i> • <i>Whiteboard</i> • <i>Turn and Talk</i> • <i>Share Opinion</i> 	
		High Order Questioning	High order questioning accounts for a minimum of 1/4 of all verbal questioning. High order is defined as comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation as opposed to knowledge (basic recall).	
		Rigorous Expectations	Students are held accountable to answers that are accurate, well presented and complete in both verbal interactions and written work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>On The Hook</i> • <i>Specific, Complete and Well-Presented Answers</i> • <i>Defend Support and Improve</i> 	
		Release of Responsibility	The tide of instruction is overtly moving towards student independence. As success is observed, the teacher reduces support in an effort to reach full independent student proficiency.	
		Embrace Error	Teacher capitalizes on student mistakes as learning opportunities for individual students and the class as a whole. By exploring student error, teachers convey that patience, effort, and a thoughtful approach will yield a deeper understanding of the content. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Scaffolded Questions</i> • <i>Dissect Misunderstanding</i> • <i>Punch the Error</i> 	

The Advanced Instruction standard is a pilot for the 2011-12 school year. As part of the pilot, Advanced and Master teachers will receive a score and written feedback on this standard for each formal observation. This score and feedback will not influence or be included in a teacher's overall formal score.

Advanced Instruction <i>Advanced and Master Teachers</i>		Teacher ensures every assignment, interaction, lesson, and instructional choice inside and outside of the classroom drives academic achievement, expertly meeting individual needs of students and cohorts. Teacher knows the performance of every student, meets them where they are, and ensures they reach a never wavering high bar. Every moment is used strategically to get students one step closer to college.	
STRANDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	Self Aware	Students are acutely aware of their progress on the current objective, report period, semester, and year long goals. When asked, students can accurately self assess understanding of the current lesson. Students are able to articulate or provide documentation that outlines subject related strengths and focus areas.
		Student Independence	Students are meeting expectations of independence and self management according to the appropriate level of the College Continuum.
	TEACHER ACTIONS	Data Driven Differentiation	Data from benchmarks, weekly, and daily assessments actively influence whole group, small group, and individual instruction every moment of class. Teacher makes daily conscious choices of what to teach and how to teach it based on what a student knows and needs to know. The logic behind such decisions is teacher documented, verbally communicated to students, and/or displayed in the classroom.
		High Bar	Teacher maintains an incredibly high academic bar for every student that is equivalent to any high performing school. The teacher explicitly and consistently teaches, reinforces, and holds students accountable to the level of rigor and self management expected at the appropriate level of the college continuum.
		Use Non Instructional Time	All time outside of class (including homework, ongoing independent projects, tutoring, office hours, transitions, etc.) is maximized and purposeful, always driving towards student academic achievement. Teacher finds creative ways to consistently increase the amount of time students spend on work, practice, studying, reading, academics, etc.
		Broad Instruction	Targeted instruction is broadened to provide learning that is applicable beyond the assessment. Instruction not only conveys the specific information or steps necessary to achieve the objective, it also equips students with the context to achieve conceptual, transferable understanding. Academic support skills are integrated (tech skills, communication, etc.) alongside priority content, but never sacrifices or replaces priority content. Broad instruction is <i>in addition</i> to a targeted approach, always enhancing students' ability to perform on all assessments.
		Maximize Student Interactions	Student to student interaction and discussion is used as a key instructional strategy in and outside of class. Student conversation increases the number of opportunities in which students engage with, understand, practice, and explore academic content and skills.
		Strategic Feedback	Teacher uses every feedback opportunity (verbal and written) to increase student understanding of the content. Grading is thoughtful, purposeful, timely, and is used as another lever for student achievement. Feedback is never limited to a grade or percent accuracy, next steps and focus areas are always included. Students are required to act on feedback provided by the teacher. • <i>Assignment Revisions</i> • <i>Assessment Error Analysis</i>