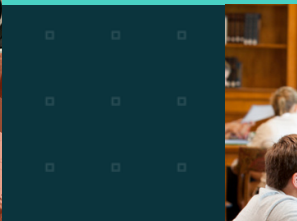
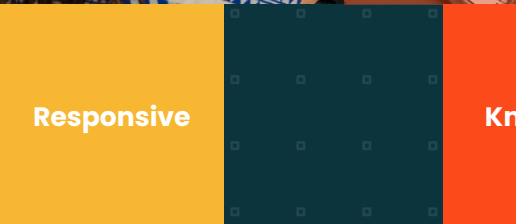


GOA



Responsive

Knowledgeable

# Three Domains of Teaching Expertise: An Educator Growth Framework

# Is It Time to Redefine Great Teaching at Your School?



**Great teaching is intentional and expansive. It balances expertise in content, pedagogy, and human development.**



**This framework defines the domains of expertise that guide professional growth for educators.**



**This is not simply a checklist of “Look Fors,” but a language for conversation, reflection, and design.**



# Great teachers see their subject as a way of making sense of the world.



## Teachers as Content Experts

*They have a deep knowledge of, and passion for, their discipline as a living practice to help students think like practitioners, not just to master content.*

### Observable Teaching Moves

- ✓ Poses authentic disciplinary questions that mirror how historians, scientists, or artists actually grapple with their field.
- ✓ Makes visible the contested nature of knowledge by explicitly recognizing that knowledge is built through debate, evidence, and evolving understanding.
- ✓ Connects content to current issues students encounter by designing learning around relevant problems that exist in their lives or communities.
- ✓ Pushes beyond comprehension to disciplinary thinking by asking students to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, or create using the tools and methods of the field.
- ✓ Models enthusiasm and curiosity for the discipline's questions.

# Great teachers design and deliver learning with clarity, flexibility, and purpose.



## Teachers as Pedagogical Experts

*They intentionally design, deliver, and assess learning through diverse approaches that promote reflection and measurable impact.*

### Observable Teaching Moves

- ✓ Designs learning experiences that surface student thinking by creating tasks, prompts, and structures that make student understanding visible.
- ✓ Balances structure and openness purposefully and knows when to use direct instruction, when to facilitate discussion, when to step back for inquiry.
- ✓ Uses formative assessment to advance learning. Gathers evidence of understanding throughout and adjusts instruction based on what surfaces. Students engage in self-assessment and reflection.
- ✓ Designs for transfer, not just mastery. Creates opportunities for students to apply learning in new contexts, demonstrating they can use knowledge flexibly, not just reproduce it.
- ✓ Gives timely, specific, and actionable feedback that moves learning forward. This helps students see their progress and understand their next steps.

# Great teachers build communities where every learner belongs and can thrive.



## Teachers as Developmental Experts

*They understand how students grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially, and they shape learning experiences to meet students where they are while helping them stretch toward independence and self-awareness.*

## Observable Teaching Moves

- ☒ Knows where each learner is. Notices cognitive load, engagement, and readiness for challenge, then shifts the plan accordingly.
- ☒ Designs multiple entry points into content. Creates pathways that honor readiness levels, learning preferences, and neurodiversity without lowering expectations.
- ☒ Builds structures that support student agency. Scaffolds support so students make meaningful choices while developing self-direction and metacognition.
- ☒ Creates conditions where every student belongs. Students see themselves reflected in materials, examples, and classroom norms. Their perspectives matter.
- ☒ Names and teaches skills for stretching. Explicitly teaches the strategies, habits, and mindsets needed to tackle challenging work independently.

# Designing For Learners: The Domains in Practice



## Design for Relevance

This is where teachers make meaning relevant to each learner. It's about connection and helping students see themselves in the discipline.



## Design for Understanding

This is where teachers turn disciplinary knowledge into learnable, assessable experiences. It's about translating ideas into lessons.



## Responsive Design

This is where structure meets empathy. It's about designing instruction that anticipates readiness, motivation, and cognitive load.



# The Intersections:

## DESIGN FOR RELEVANCE

### *Content + Developmental*

#### Make Meaning Relevant To Each Learner

*This is about bridging disciplinary knowledge with student identity, experience, and ways of knowing.*

#### What this looks like in practice:

- Surfacing students' lived experiences as resources for understanding content, not just hooks for engagement.
- Creating entry points that honor different cultural perspectives while building toward disciplinary thinking.
- Helping students see themselves as legitimate knowers and contributors in the discipline.
- Making explicit whose perspectives have been centered historically and creating space for other voices.
- Designing content connections that matter to these particular students, not generic "real-world applications."

**"You have deep content expertise and genuine passion for your discipline. Let's explore how to make that content feel urgent and personally meaningful to these specific students. How can we help them see themselves in this work?"**

**Growth Conversation Framing**

# The Intersections:

## DESIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

### *Content + Pedagogical*

#### Translate Knowledge into Accessible Learning

*This requires both deep content expertise and pedagogical skill to make complex ideas accessible without losing rigor.*

#### What this looks like in practice:

- Breaking complex disciplinary concepts into teachable components while preserving their authentic complexity.
- Sequencing learning so students build understanding progressively toward transfer.
- Designing assessments that reveal disciplinary thinking, not just content recall.
- Making the invisible visible by surfacing the thinking processes experts use.
- Creating learning experiences where students practice the discipline, not just learn about it.

**"Your content knowledge is really strong. Let's focus on how you're translating that into learning experiences. What are the key conceptual building blocks students need, and how can you design tasks that make their developing understanding visible?"**

**Growth Conversation Framing**

# The Intersections:

## RESPONSIVE DESIGN

### *Developmental + Pedagogical*

#### Structure Meets Empathy

*Teachers working at this intersection make deliberate pedagogical decisions based on deep understanding of learner readiness, motivation, and cognitive load.*

#### What this looks like in practice:

- Adjusting scaffolds based on what students reveal about their understanding.
- Knowing when to provide more structure and when to remove it so students can work independently.
- Designing learning sequences that account for developmental readiness, not just content logic.
- Balancing challenge and support so students stretch without breaking.
- Using evidence of student thinking, not just engagement, to inform instructional pivots.

**"You're strong at reading students emotionally, and you have great pedagogical range. Let's work on connecting those two. How can you use what you notice about students' readiness to decide which instructional approach to use in the moment?"**

**Growth Conversation Framing**

# How GOA Could Work

Schools that engage with GOA's **Center for Professional Learning** aren't just building teacher capacity—they're redefining what **great teaching** looks like together.

[Schedule a quick call](#)

GOA is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization founded and run by educators that reimagines learning to empower students and educators to thrive in a globally networked society.



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**G O A**

**Passion-based. Mission-driven.  
Learner-centered.**

