



Explanation of Terms for National Board Certified Teacher Candidates

Note: the following terms are an excerpt from *The FastTrack—Gaining a Big-Picture View of the National Board Certification Process for Teachers*.

These terms are important in the National Board Certification process— we've defined them according to our work with candidates, not from official NBPTS materials.

Accomplished teaching—NBPTS term for teaching that meets the Standards.

Architecture of Accomplished Teaching®—NBPTS graphic detailing the steps in accomplished teaching.

Assessment center— the standardized testing center where you will take your Component 1 test; you will register for a testing center near you after you have paid and the NBPTS sends you a “Permission to Test” letter. You must register by the January/February due date to test sometime between April and June.

Authentic engagement— the state of being intrinsically motivated to explore and learn the content.

Buzzwords— words that are current in educational discussions; words/topics that occur frequently

C1, C2, C3, C4 — abbreviations sometimes used by candidates for Components 1-4

Carol Ann Tomlinson— early researcher of Differentiation or Differentiated Instruction

Certification Area— this is very important; the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards areas for certification may or may not match the names of the certifications you have with your state. Be sure to check the nbpts.org website to find out “How to Choose Your Certification Area.”

Clear, consistent, and convincing— the criteria for receiving a 4 out of 4 on an entry (component.)

Components— the four separate entries or tasks that comprise the National Board Process

Component 1 (C1)— Testing content knowledge and pedagogy for your certificate area.

Component 2 (C2)— Demonstrating your planning, implementation and results from teaching and analyzing student work from a sequence of instruction.

Component 3 (C3)— Demonstrating your ability to engage students in learning content while providing a safe, equitable, and challenging learning environment through video recorded evidence.

Component 4 (C4)— Providing evidence of your work as a leader/learner/ and or collaborator and your professional expertise as you gather knowledge of students that allows you to identify and address a student learning need. Demonstrating your intentional choices of professional development that help you grow/ or in which you help others to grow to meet and address or advocate for student learning needs. Especially important to demonstrate two-way communication and impact on student learning.

Constructed response questions (CR)— “essay questions” in which you have 30 minutes to answer a prompt at the assessment center. You will have three CR questions and 45 SR (selected response questions.)

Contextual Information Sheet— the form/ cover sheet for each entry that describes your teaching context so the assessor can visualize the conditions under which you are required to teach.

Diagnostic assessment— a form of formative assessment that helps a teacher understand where to begin instruction. Examples: pretests or kindergarten testing at the beginning of the year.

Differentiation— the act of varying teaching methods; also known as “D.I.”

Differentiation of instruction vs. Differentiation for instruction— the former is changing methods of teaching for example, using technology rather than using group work or lecturing. The second is using various teaching methods that meet the unique needs of the individual students you teach; for example, if a student is interested in Power Ranger toys and you have had trouble helping him focus, you might choose to present letter sounds the child can associate with different Power Rangers when you are teaching one-one with him during reading.

Effective, Reflective Practitioner— this is the theme of C4.

Engagement (see also, student engagement)— student interaction with the content and with each other at the level of excitement and enthusiasm for learning. Engagement that results in a thorough exploration and attainment of the learning goals.

Entry (see components)— your component instructions from the nbpts.org website often refer to the components as “this entry...”

Evidence— each component requires you to provide clear, consistent, and convincing evidence that you have met the Standards on which you will be assessed.

Five Core Propositions[®]— These are the five basic principles outlining what Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do. You can find this document in its entirety on the nbpts.org website and it would be great to have read this the summer before you begin your candidacy.

Formative assessment— methods for gauging whether students are ready to move forward in a lesson or unit of instruction.

Helix— this is the short name for the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching[®]

Howard Gardner (see also, Multiple Intelligences)— the idea that there are many types of intelligence (8 Multiple Intelligences) was proposed by Howard Gardner and provides roots for the work of Carol Ann Tomlinson and other researchers in differentiation.

Impact on student learning— this is evidence that your planning and teaching have resulted in student learning. It can be qualitative or quantitative depending on the component and the questions to which you are being asked to respond.

Instructional context form— similar to the Contextual Information Sheet but this describes the exact lesson and students you are teaching rather than your school teaching context. They will probably not be the same.

Knowledge of Students— this is the basis for all your National Board work. The idea is that your planning and teaching must be based on these students at this moment in time. This includes an understanding of the personality of your class, understanding of each student in the class as an individual, and an understanding of the needs of this age of learner.

Leader/Learner/Collaborator— a “Big Idea” in National Board certification: the idea that teachers have a variety of roles in which they function professionally.

Level 4 Rubric— the highest score a candidate can receive is a “4” and the descriptors for the teaching that will result in this score is described in detail in the level four rubric. You can find this at the end of each component’s instructions. Very specific to your certificate area and component.

Metacognition/ Metacognitive strategies— this is when a learner thinks about how he or she learns, including how to move forward in acquiring knowledge or meeting the learning goals. Teachers can develop an arsenal of strategies to help students acquire the skills of “thinking about thinking and learning.”

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)— a non-profit entity that developed the National Board Certification process and manages and monitors and publicly advocates for accomplished teaching. You can learn more at their website: nbpts.org

NB Standards (see also, Standards)— each certificate area has a lengthy document developed by teachers of that certificate area. This is worth reading because it outlines specifically the types of criteria your work will be measured against as your entries are scored. This document gives very specific examples of what accomplished teachers of each certificate area do. You will find that you already do many of the actions and activities and have much of the knowledge outlined. The thing to notice is how you normally demonstrate those competencies, and also when you know you do NOT do those things or have that knowledge. A key method of growth and achievement of National Board certification will be remedying your deficiencies through research and trying new things during your candidacy.

NBPTS binder— candidates typically prepare some kind of binder of their National Board components by printing them or downloading them and saving them to the desktop. This prevents problems if the website is difficult to access.

Pedagogy— the specific skills that teachers have in teaching content. Some of these skills are universal (such as questioning skills); others are specific to your discipline such as use of science inquiry lessons or writing strategies in ELA.

Professional Learning Need— this refers to C4; you will describe how you reached out for and integrated information that helped you in your teaching

context or how you provided information for others so that you could impact students in some way. This is not random, but purposeful.

Reflection— Robert J. Marzano discusses the ability of teachers and other practitioners to act on the conditions in which they teach. Nurses are also reflective as they quickly assess and adjust for the unique situations in which they find themselves meeting the needs of their clientele. This reflective capability may show itself in the minute-to-minute adjustments a teacher makes, or in the more thoughtful analysis and deliberate adjustments a teacher may make at the end of a unit.

Safe, equitable, and challenging learning environment— referring to C3, you will demonstrate the decisions you make that help students feel safe; how you are equitable and encourage equity, and how you provide challenging learning opportunities for students.

Sequence of instruction— the timeframe varies by certificate area but is, for example, a segment of instruction that lasts 3-12 weeks. Sometimes called a “unit” of instruction. Important in C2.

Standards— see NBPTS Standards. These are different from your state mandated or Common Core Standards.

Student Engagement (see engagement)

Student Group Profile (also, Group Profile; Group Profile Form)— In C4, you develop a profile of a group of students using data and information and analyze it for trends that indicate a student learning need for the group.

Student Learning Need— as you analyze the trends in your Student Group Profile, you will be able to identify some common needs of that group that you can advocate for or address. This is important in C4 as you demonstrate both two-way communication and measurable impact on student learning.

Summative Assessment— typically this is the chapter assessment or unit assessment that comes at the end of the learning. It can even be a statewide standardized test, or an AP exam, etc. While it may be useful to determine a student’s schedule for next year or next semester, the opportunity for the student to learn the material has usually passed. Assessments are specifically important in C2 and C4

Videos— in C3 you video record yourself teaching students.

Written Commentary— the instructions for each component have an Overview, a description of “What Do I Need to Do?” other instructions, and a Written Commentary. These are the prompts found after all the other instructions that you will respond to using a set number of pages (usually around 12 or 13 pages) in which you describe, analyze, and reflect on your work for that entry.

Additional Resources Available from MyNationalBoard.com:

The FastTrack™ Series:

Component 1 (with video)

Component 2 (with videos)

Component 3 (with video)

Component 4 (with video)

The Complete Course with Video Access

Online Cohort work and Individual Coaching

Other Free Resources