



# Characteristics of Teachers of ALL Students

Shared Responsibility for Successful Students

**a** **Time Allotted: 45 Minutes**

**b** **Materials/Equipment**

- Characteristics Chart for each participant (see page 3)
- Summary chart for group debrief

**c** **Description**

An individual or grade level/department team activity to self-assess adapted from Sonia Nieto's "Characteristics of Teachers of All Students." Source: Nieto, S. (2005). *Why We Teach*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**d** **Directions**

1. Introduce the activity. Topics include: Sonia Nieto, school improvement plan, work group assignments to implement suggested solutions for each topic, joint school and community efforts, and so on.
2. Provide the following directions to the groups.
  - a. Work as a team.
  - b. Complete the rating and discussion or barriers and solutions for each of the quality standards on the chart.
  - c. Allow approximately 20-25 minutes for this portion of the activity.
3. Reach a consensus about the status grade for each standard, and then ask one representative from each team to place their ratings on the master chart at the front of the room.
4. Collaboratively debrief, asking volunteers to share their discussion of barriers and solutions for each quality standard.
5. Option: Have participants add round colored dots to indicate their top priority for this year on the group Characteristics Chart. Discuss the implications for future professional developments.

6. As the facilitator, conclude the session by discussing how this information will be used in your school to continue the work toward improved (and equitable) outcomes for all students.
7. Provide a copy of the summary chart to the principal.
8. Option: To gather post data, you can reassess at a later date.

HANDOUT

## Characteristics of Effective Teachers of All Students

Source: Nieto, S. (2005). *Why we teach*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp 8-9.

Numerous educational researchers over the years have tackled the question of what it means to be a successful teacher of students of diverse backgrounds. A synthesis of this literature suggests a number of common characteristics that describe highly qualified teachers. As an educator interested in meeting and exceeding these standards, please use this instrument as a self-assessment tool for your own professional growth. A copy of your results (without your name or identifying information) will be provided to your principal to assist in planning professional development and coaching needs for the school.

Please be as candid as possible in your ratings. Save a copy of this instrument and repeat your self-assessment each year to track your own professional growth.

Characteristics of Effective Teachers of ALL Students	Expert	Skilled	Emerging	Neophyte
1. Strong subject matter knowledge				
2. Strong knowledge of research-based instructional strategies.				
3. Excellent communication skills.				
4. Connect learning to students' lives.				
5. Have high expectations for all students, even for those whom others may have given up on.				
6. Stay committed to students in spite of obstacles that get in the way.				
7. Place a high value on students' identities (culture, race, language, gender, and experiences, among others) as a foundation for learning.				
8. View parents and other community members as partners in education.				
9. Create a safe haven for learning.				
10. Dare to challenge the bureaucracy of the school and district. Have the skill and courage to have difficult conversations with colleagues.				
11. Demonstrate resilience in the face of difficult situations.				
12. Use active learning strategies.				
13. Exhibit eagerness to experiment and can "think on their feet".				
14. View themselves as lifelong learners.				
15. Care about and respect their students.				
16. Retain a passion for teaching.				

For any characteristic that you scored either 'emerging' or 'neophyte', indicate one or two strategies you will use to increase your expertise.

Congratulations! Thank you for your commitment to lifelong learning!