

## Teacher Quality Standard I

**Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach. The elementary teacher is an expert in literacy and mathematics and is knowledgeable in all other content that he or she teaches (e.g., science, social studies, arts, physical education, or world languages). The secondary teacher has knowledge of literacy and mathematics and is an expert in his or her content endorsement area(s).**

*The key to distinguishing the knowledge base of teaching rests at the intersection of content and pedagogy.*

—L. S. Shulman

To teach all students according to today's standards, teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another, and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others. (Shulman, 1987)

Although Shulman's work dates back to the late 1980s, the importance of teacher content knowledge and pedagogical expertise has never been more important than it is now as teachers ensure students are college and career ready for the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### Element A

**Teachers provide instruction that is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards; their district's organized plan of instruction; and the individual needs of their students.**

*A teacher translates instructional outcomes into learning experiences for students through the design of instruction; it is here that a teacher's knowledge of the content, knowledge of his/her students, clarity of instructional outcomes, and knowledge of resources come together to result in a plan of action. Even in classrooms where students assume considerable responsibility for their learning, the teacher is in charge of organizing the environment, managing the learning process, and establishing the framework for assessment.*

—Charlotte Danielson

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in providing instruction that is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards, their district's plan of instruction and the needs of their students, they must implement lesson plans that provide for review of prior learning and are based on objectives appropriate for students. As a support in implementation of lesson plans, the teacher collaborates with other school staff to vertically and horizontally align, articulate, and deliver the approved curriculum.



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## **BASIC RATING LEVEL**

### **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:**

#### **Uses lesson plans that reflect:**

- *Opportunities to review prior learning.*

In the book, *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*, John Hattie identifies three big ideas from Bransford's research in *How People Learn*. One of the big ideas he identifies is linking previous knowledge to new learning.

Although we start with existing knowledge, new learning is not simply tacked on, 'brick by brick,' to the old knowledge—which is why the relationships between old and new understandings are so important. We come to know ideas, and then we can be asked to relate, and extend them. This then leads to conceptual understanding, which can then in turn become a new idea—and so the cycle continues. ...Teachers therefore need to be aware of each student's surface and deep knowing, and the ways in which students have current conceptions, and constantly check to see if the new ideas are being assimilated and accommodated by each learner. (Hattie, 2012, p. 115)

#### Ways for teachers and students to review prior learning:

- Questioning: Questions can be a powerful review activity when they are used to assess student learning from previous lessons. Questions may be used to review vocabulary or previously taught content. Example follows:
  - Teacher: "Yesterday we made inferences about a character's traits. How did we do that? How did we connect text evidence to our schema? What is our schema? Today, we are going to use the same process and infer about what a character may be thinking or feeling."
- Summarizing: A brief summary of previous learning experiences can help students know what to expect and how the lesson activities are connected to previous learning and unit goals. A summary might consist of connecting a series of lessons to unit goals or academic standards for the purpose of viewing scaffolds of concepts or skills that support student mastery. Examples follow:
  - Teacher: "We have been learning about the events that led to the Revolutionary War. We examined the impact of taxes imposed on the colonists by the King and Parliament. We looked at the impact of the Boston Tea Party on the relationship between England and the colonists. Today, we are going to learn about the Boston Massacre and its impact on this relationship."
  - Students may also provide summaries:
    - Use their notes to summarize learning over a series of lessons.
    - Review vocabulary and explain how it has connected to concepts learned.
    - Teacher may say: "Turn and talk to a partner and summarize what we learned yesterday."
- KWL Chart: Teacher and students begin a lesson by revisiting a KWL chart to review what students have learned and still want to learn about a specific concept or skill. Example follows:
  - Teacher: "We began our unit on Claude Monet and Impressionism by completing the K and W portions of our chart. Let's review some of the things you said you wanted to know about this type of art. Based on the lesson yesterday, what things have you learned? What do you still want to know? As we continue our study of Monet and Impressionism, record questions you have and we will add them to our KWL chart. Your questions can help guide our unit of study."

#### Daily review of previously learned concepts or skills can support student learning in the following ways:

- Increase student engagement by making learning relevant and meaningful to students' lives and past learning experiences.
  - Support retention of knowledge by reviewing previously learned concepts or skills and connecting them to new learning.
  - Support students in making their own connections to previous learning and other disciplines.
- See also Standard I, Element E, Standard 1, Element F and Standard III, Element C*



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- Provide assessment information on students’ retention of previously taught content or skills.  
*See also Standard III, Element B.*

*Refer to this external resource for additional information:*

- Article: “Are you Tapping into Prior Knowledge Often Enough in Your Classroom?” by Rebecca Alber  
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/prior-knowledge-tapping-into-often-classroom-rebecca-alber>  
Article explains the importance of students using prior knowledge and experience to guide their learning and provides ideas for how teachers may do this.

*Refer to this internal resource for additional information:*

- Examples of Lesson Plans  
Document provides examples of kindergarten, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and high school lesson plans that align with professional practices referenced under Basic.
- *Instructional objectives appropriate for students.*

Instructional objectives must be clear and stated in terms of student learning rather than student activity: “What will students *learn* as a result of the instructional and student activity?” Not, “What will students do?” That learning objectives are clearly stated does not imply that they should be low level in their cognitive challenge.

Instructional goals should be capable of assessment. They must be stated in clear language that permits viable methods of evaluation and the establishment of performance standards. Verbs that define instructional goals should be unambiguous and suggest assessment techniques. The goals must be appropriate to the diverse students in a teacher’s charge, providing for the students’ age and developmental levels, prior skills and knowledge, and interests and background. (Danielson, 1996)

Even though the term learning *goal* (objective) is commonly used by practitioners, there appears to be some confusion as to its exact nature. For example, consider the following list, which includes frequently seen learning goals:

- Students will successfully complete the exercises in the back of chapter 3.
- Students will create a metaphor representing the food pyramid.
- Students will be able to determine subject/verb agreement in a variety of simple, compound, and complete sentences.
- Students will define the characteristics of fables, fairy tales, and tall tales.
- Students will investigate the relationship between speed of air flow and lift provided by an airplane wing.

Some of the statements—the first, second, and last—involve activities as opposed to learning goals. As the name implies, activities are things students do. “... Activities are a crucial part of effective teaching. They constitute a means by which the ends or learning goals are accomplished. However, they are not learning goals.” (Marzano, 2007, p. 17)

Guiding questions for the development of instructional objectives:

- What do students need to know about (concept or skill)?
  - What are the procedural skills students must have?
  - What are the enduring understandings students need to obtain?
- What do my students already know about (concept or skill)?
- How will I need to sequence and segment student learning for this standard?
- How will the language of the standard impact the language of instructional objectives?
- What sub-objectives will need to be reviewed versus those that will need to be taught?



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- How will I measure student mastery of the standard and daily objectives?

Examples of measurable verbs for use in developing instructional objectives:

list	identify	retell
define	describe	solve
summarize	explain	compare
determine	contrast	evaluate

*Refer to this external resource for additional information:*

- Article: “Know Where Your Students Are Going” by Robyn Jackson  
[http://tcrpalliance.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/objectives\\_know-where-your-students-are-going.pdf](http://tcrpalliance.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/objectives_know-where-your-students-are-going.pdf)  
 Article provides guidelines for writing learning objectives.

*Refer to this internal resource for additional information:*

- Learning Objectives vs Activity Statements  
 Document provides examples of each for a variety of grade levels and content areas.
- *Connections to specific learning objectives and approved curriculum.*

According to Danielson (2007), “A critical feature of a lesson plan is coherence; that is, the different elements of the plan all hang together.” (p. 57)

It is each teacher’s responsibility to become knowledgeable about the district’s curriculum. This step is a prerequisite to using lesson plans that are connected to the approved curriculum. Each aspect of a lesson plan should communicate the learning objective, the learning prerequisites, the sequence of student and teacher activities, the materials required, and the assessment tool and criteria for mastery. Taken together, these parts constitute an end (the objective), the means (what the teacher and students will be doing during the lesson), and an assessment (information about student learning).

*See also Standard III, Element G.*



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