

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 21st 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.

PROFICIENT RATING LEVEL¹

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

- Collaborates with other school staff to vertically and horizontally align, articulate, and deliver the approved curriculum.

¹ Throughout this guide, a square bullet denotes a professional practice that is not observable.



[Click here to go back to the table of contents and view the resource guide in its entirety.](#)

Collaborative analysis of student learning can be the lifeblood of school improvement.

—Georgea Langer and Amy Colten

Planning can be done in many ways, but the most powerful is when teachers work together to develop plans, develop common understandings of what is worth teaching, collaborate on understanding their beliefs of challenge and progress, and work together to evaluate the impact of their planning on student outcomes. One of the major messages from *Visible Learning* is the power of teachers learning from and talking to each other about planning. (Hattie, 2012, p. 41)

Collaboration does not happen automatically. Schools must create an environment in which teachers and leaders can feel safe to take risks, ask questions, and accept feedback from peers. Effective norms and protocols for collaboration can help maximize the time teachers are together and ensure teachers are equipped to find solutions that will result in achievement for all students.

According to Langer & Colton (2005), “These skills help teachers and organizations move beyond a ‘culture of polite conversation’ to deep analysis of teacher and learning.” (p. 26)

See also Standard III, Element A.

Refer to this external resource for additional information:

- Article: “The Benefits of Teacher Collaboration” by Carla Thomas McClure
<http://www.districtadministration.com/article/benefits-teacher-collaboration>
Article examines the impact of teacher collaboration on student achievement.



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