

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 B: All Teachers

Teachers demonstrate knowledge of student literacy development in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

This section describes professional practices that should be demonstrated by ALL TEACHERS, regardless of grade level or subject taught.

The power of literacy lies not only in the ability to read and write, but rather in an individual's capacity to put those skills to work in shaping the course of his or her own life.

—Paulo Freire

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in demonstrating knowledge of student literacy development, they must implement lesson plans that integrate literacy with the content being taught. Regardless of the content being taught, the teacher makes complex reading accessible to students at all skill levels. Instruction is provided that enhances students' critical thinking, information literacy, and literacy skill development.



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BASIC RATING LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

- ***Demonstrates an understanding of literacy content and skills.***

Content literacy can be defined as the ability to use reading and writing for the acquisition of new content in a given discipline. Such ability includes three principal cognitive components: general literacy skills, content-specific literacy skills (such as map reading in the social studies,) and prior knowledge of content. (McKenna & Robinson, 1990, para. 1)

For teachers to demonstrate an understanding of literacy content, they must be knowledgeable of the skills involved in reading and comprehending various types and levels of texts, including the vocabulary, features, and structures of the text. They must also have knowledge of the skills students need for effective oral and written communication.

The teacher demonstrates this understanding by modeling how to apply literacy skills to the content being taught. While there are numerous examples of how literacy skills apply to learning content, below are a few ways this may look in all grade levels and content areas.

- Vocabulary: Modeling use of morphology to define unknown words.
- Structure: Modeling how to use text features in an information text, such as graphics, headings, bold words, etc., to help the reader learn information and comprehend the text.
- Comprehension—Cause and Effect: Modeling how to identify events that cause other events. This may be applied to historical events, scientific events, events that impact a musician’s or artist’s work, etc.
- Previewing text: Modeling how to preview a text based on the cover, graphics, chapter titles or headings, etc., in order to make connections to the text and gain an understanding of the content.

Disciplinary literacy is defined by the Colorado Academic Standards as “the intersection of content knowledge, experiences, and skills necessary to demonstrate understanding through the ability to read, write, communicate, and think critically using approaches unique to a specific discipline.” (Hartman, 2013)

See also Standard I, Element E.



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