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: Elementary and Secondary Teachers

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

This section describes professional practices that should be demonstrated by ELEMENTARY TEACHERS responsible for teaching language arts and/or reading and SECONDARY TEACHERS responsible for teaching English, language arts and/or reading.

Professional practices appearing 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 integrate literacy skills into instruction that is purposeful, explicit, and systematic. Literacy instruction also must be based on student needs, intensive, and of sufficient duration to accelerate student learning. The elementary teacher also will emphasize literacy connections to other subject areas, and the secondary teacher will provide opportunities for students to apply literacy skills.

NOTE: For Element B: Elementary Teachers and Secondary Teachers, the professional practices are referenced together. When a practice or content refers to only one level, it is appropriately designated.

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

PROFICIENT RATING LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

Provides literacy instruction that is:

- ○ ***Needs-based.***

Literacy instruction that is needs-based is differentiated based on the academic levels, language, and learning preferences of students. Differentiated literacy instruction cannot be limited to the instruction used for students with disabilities, but rather the instruction that is used to teach literacy skills to all students. Therefore, the teacher must be aware of the needs of each student and how to best use a district or school literacy curriculum to meet these needs.

> For differentiation to be effective, teachers need to know where each student begins and where he or she is in his or her journey towards meeting the learning objectives of a lesson. Depending on a student's progress towards the objective, their understanding of procedural skills and conceptual understandings, their level of motivation, and their strategies for learning, the teacher will have to provide different ways in which students can demonstrate mastery and understanding along the way to meeting the objective. The key is for teachers to have clear reasons for differentiation, and relate what they do differently to where the student is located on the progression from novice to capable, relative to the learning objective and criteria for mastery. For this to occur, the use of frequent formative assessments is needed to monitor each student's progress towards the criteria. (Hattie, 2012, p. 109)

Literacy instruction that is needs-based may include:

- Providing instruction in phonological awareness or phonics based on students' languages and/or knowledge of letter sounds.
- Differentiating vocabulary words that are explicitly taught based on students' languages and/or speaking and reading vocabularies.
- Selecting texts for instruction and student application of skills based on Lexile levels, comprehension skills, and/or interests.
- Segmenting the use of a text to support student comprehension and fluency. This may include "chunking" the text differently based on student needs.
- Adjusting the pacing of a lesson to allow students additional time with a text or to accelerate student learning as needed.

Refer to these external resources for additional information:
- Article: "Realizing Opportunities for English Learners in the Common Core English Language Arts and Disciplinary Literacy Standards" by George C. Bunch, Amanda Kibler, and Susan Pimentel

http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/understanding_language_realizing_opportunities_for_english_learners_research_ela.pdf

> Article explores strategies for supporting English language learning students in mastering Common Core literacy.

- Document: Elements of Success For All With The CCSS: Grades K-5 Achieve the Core
  http://achievethecore.org/page/233/elements-of-success-for-all-with-the-ccss-grades-k-5-detail-pg
  > Document outlines the key areas in which to support struggling readers. Although the Website describes the document as a support for K-5, the key areas are applicable to all grades.
- Website: 15 ways to simplify reading texts (maintained by Teflnet)
  http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/read/simplify-reading-texts/
  > Website provides ways to make complex texts accessible to second-language speakers.
- Website: Content Instruction for ELLs provided by (Colorin Colorado!)
  http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/content/
  > Website provides strategies to support second-language speakers with accessing complex texts in math, science, social studies, and language arts.

- ○ ***Intensive.***

Instruction that is **intensive** provides students with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the content being taught so they can develop conceptual understandings that lead to independent application of skills.

Characteristics of intensive instruction:
- Instruction is broken down in a systematic manner that allows students to master all of the key concepts of the content taught.
- Connections are made to previous learning and students' experiences that allow students to build on prior knowledge and successes.
- Models are provided for how the content taught can be applied to reading, writing, and/or communications skills students need to develop. The thinking process they need to apply is clearly labeled so students understand what they are to do, how they are to do it, and why it is important.

- ○ ***Of sufficient duration to accelerate learning.***

Within each unit of study or lesson, students need sufficient time to observe the "expert" reader or writer, the teacher, apply the literacy skills being taught. Instruction is of sufficient duration when it includes time for the teacher to provide intensive instruction and time for students to apply the skills with others and independently. Therefore, the duration of the instruction is dependent on the content being taught and the age and needs of the students. This applies to whole-group instruction as well as small-group instruction. Instruction can lead to accelerated learning when students are allowed to learn in their preferred style and in a manner that challenges their thinking and promotes the acquisition of knowledge.

Factors that promote students in accelerating their learning:

- Positive Learning Environment: Students learn best in a positive physical, emotional, and social environment — one that promotes safety and risk-taking and values individual differences.
- Engagement: Students need to be actively involved in the learning process and take responsibility for their own learning. Knowledge is not something students can passively absorb.
- Collaboration: Students need opportunities to share their thinking with others. Learning is a shared experience that involves peer collaboration and communication in which students learn from one another.
- Choices: Students are more motivated to learn when they have a variety of materials and tasks from which to choose based on their interests, learning preferences and academic needs.

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: "The Six Ts of Effective Elementary Literacy Instruction" by Richard Allington
  Retrievable at http://www.readingrockets.org/article/96/
  > Article describes Allington's research on what matters most in teaching kids to read based on observations of effective and expert teachers. **(ELEMENTARY TEACHERS)**
- Website: Achieve the Core
  http://achievethecore.org/
  > Website provides a variety of resources for teaching the Common Core Literacy Standards.

Suggested books on literacy instruction:

- *7 Keys to Comprehension How to Help Your Kids Read It and Get It!* by Susan Zimmerman and Chryse Hutchins
- *Comprehension Shouldn't be Silent From Strategy Instruction to Student Independence* by Michelle J. Kelley and Nicki Clausen-Grace
- *Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategie*s by Jeffrey D. Wilhelm
- *What Really Matters in Vocabulary Research-Based Practices across the Curriculum* by Patricia M. Cunningham