

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.



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

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

PARTIALLY PROFICIENT RATING LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

Integrates literacy skills into lessons and assignments, including:

- **Phonological awareness. (ELEMENTARY TEACHERS)**
 - Phonological awareness refers to a person's ability to recognize component speech sounds that make up spoken words. Essentially, words can be separated in three ways. The easiest is by syllable — rab-bit. A second way involves separating words into onsets (initial consonant[s]) and rime (the vowel and what follows) — cat = C/AT. The third (and most difficult) way to demonstrate phonological awareness is by dividing words into phonemes, or individual sounds — cat = C/A/T. Phonological awareness is essential for learning phonics. Colorado Department of Education:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/resources>

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Website: National Center for Reading First Technical Assistance
http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/coloradoliteracy/crf/downloads/lesson_maps/templates/templates_revised_08.15.07.pdf
Website provides a sequenced set of phonological awareness activities to help teachers scaffold early reading instruction.
- Website: Phonological Awareness
<http://www.phonologicalawareness.org/>
Website provides a variety of developmentally sequenced phonological awareness activities.
- **Phonics. (ELEMENTARY TEACHERS)**
Phonics typically refers to study that stresses letters and the sounds they represent. This word is also used to describe reading and/or spelling instruction that teaches sound-symbol correspondences. Colorado Department of Education:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/resources>

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Website: SoftSchools.com
http://www.softschools.com/language_arts/phonics/
Website provides numerous materials and activities for the teaching of phonics.
- Website: Phonics Printable Worksheets and Activities (Word Families) maintained by Kidzone DLTK's Inc.
<http://kidzone.ws/phonics/index.htm>
Website provides printable materials for the teaching of phonics.
- **Vocabulary.**



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

“We think with words, therefore to improve thinking, teach vocabulary.”—A. Draper and G. Moeller

The size of students’ vocabularies differs greatly when they first enter school and as they continue through the grades. These differences are attributed to many factors, including the amount of talking that occurs at home, the native language of the student and family, the amount of reading materials in the home, and the amount of reading a student does independently. However, vocabulary acquisition is crucial for students’ academic and career success, and vocabulary instruction is an essential element of literacy instruction at all grade levels.

The more a student’s vocabulary increases, the easier it becomes for him to make connections to new words. When learning how to use context clues or affixes, students must be able to use what they already know about words to determine the meaning of unknown words they encounter in texts and oral communication.

Elements of effective vocabulary instruction:

- Multiple and varied encounters with words: It takes a minimum of 15 encounters with a new word for a student to understand and apply the word independently.
- Visual representations: Vocabulary development increases when students have visual images of words. The use of visuals is especially important when vocabulary words are initially taught. As students learn new words, it is important for them to create their own visual representations.
- Use of vocabulary: For new vocabulary words to become part of students’ reading and communication, they must have numerous opportunities to utilize the words. The teacher must communicate this expectation and model utilizing the words in their conversations with students.
- Word strategies: Students should be taught strategies for learning new words independently, such as instruction in word parts, context, and use of reference tools. (Adapted from Cunningham, 2009)

When vocabulary instruction is limited to rote copying of definitions, there is limited word learning.

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: “Identifying Academic Language Demands in Support of the Common Core Standards” by Susan O’Hara, Robert Pritchard, and Jeff Zwiers
<http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol7/717-ohara.aspx>
Article discusses the focus on academic language in the Common Core State Standards, and emphasizes the need for vocabulary instruction for ELL students.
- Article: “The Words Students Need” by Joshua F. Lawrence, Claire White, and Catherine E. Snow
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct10/vol68/num02/The-Words-Students-Need.aspx>
Article explains the importance of vocabulary instruction and the impact on middle school students. Links to resources for vocabulary instruction are included.
- Document: Academic Vocabulary and CCSS by the Aspen Institute
<http://www.aspendri.org/portal/browse/DocumentDetail?documentId=1416&download>



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

Document defines academic vocabulary, provides a checklist for selecting academic vocabulary, and discusses the connection of academic vocabulary and text-dependent questions.

- Website: abcteach

<http://www.abcteach.com/directory/teaching-extras-word-walls-2235-2-1>

Website provides vocabulary cards connected to multiple content areas the teacher may use for instruction and/or word walls. **(ELEMENTARY TEACHERS)**

○ **Comprehension.**

The RAND Reading Study Group defined reading comprehension as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (2002, p. xiii). Colorado Department of Education:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/resources#comprehension>

One of the literacy shifts represented in the Colorado Academic Standards is the increased use of complex texts, both fiction and non-fiction. For students to be successful with the evidence outcomes listed under the Standard, Reading for All Purposes, they must be aware of the thinking, or meta-cognitive, strategies readers apply in order to comprehend texts.

The research on comprehension strategy instruction provides powerful evidence that most struggling readers (and most not-so-struggling readers) benefit enormously when we can construct lessons that help make the comprehension process visible. Many students only develop the strategies they need with much instructional support. These students need demonstrations, effective strategy use, and lots of opportunities to apply the demonstrated strategy over time and in multiple situations. (Allington, 2005)

The goal of comprehension instruction should be “on the development of transferable strategies” that promote the “independent use of effective thinking while reading” (Allington, 2005, p. 120).

...a think-aloud of reading is creating a record, either through writing or talking aloud, of the strategic decision-making and interpretive processes of going through a text, reporting everything the reader is aware of noticing, doing, seeing, feeling, asking, and understanding as she reads. A think-aloud involves talking about the reading strategies you are using and the content of the piece you are reading. (Wilhelm, 2001, p. 19)

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: “Promoting Reading Comprehension in Secondary Students with LD” prepared by Marcia Kosanovich, Ph.D.

<http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/publications/infosheets/promoting-reading-comprehension-in-secondary-students-with-learning-disabilities>

Article describes strategies that can support the comprehension of secondary students with learning disabilities. **(SECONDARY TEACHERS)**

- Website: Comprehension: Reading Rockets sponsored by WETA Public Broadcasting

<http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101/comprehension>



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

Website provides links to articles and videos on instructional strategies for teaching comprehension.

- Website: Literacy Design Collaborative
<http://www.ldc.org/>
Website, Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC), offers a research-based approach to teaching of literacy in all content areas in grades K–12.

○ **Fluency.**

Fluent reading is defined as the ability to access text with appropriate rate, accuracy, and prosody. Reading rate refers to the speed at which readers move through text. Accuracy refers to the ability to read without miscues. Finally, prosody is considered a critical component of oral reading fluency. Prosody is the ability to read with appropriate phrasing and intonation. The ability to read with good prosody depends on automatic, accurate word recognition.

Adapted from Colorado Department of Education:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/resources>

Refer to this external resource for additional information:

- Document: Determining Who Needs Fluency Training
http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/coloradoliteracy/crf/downloads/prodev/1st/determining_who_needs_fluency_training.pdf
Document is provided by the Colorado Department of Education as a tool for identifying students who need support with fluency instruction.

○ **Writing.**

“If you cannot write well, you cannot think well, and if you cannot think well, others will do your thinking for you.”—George Orwell

Writing helps students make sense of what they are learning. It helps them make connections to their own lives or others' ideas. Students cannot write without thinking about what they want to communicate.

Students should demonstrate increasing sophistication in written expression as they progress through school. Student writing should require the use of text-based evidence gleaned from

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



increasingly demanding texts as the students move through school. Students advancing through the grades are expected to master the Colorado Academic Standards and further develop skills and understandings mastered in preceding grades.

Adapted from Colorado Department of Education

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/resources#top>

Elements of effective writing instruction:

- **Modeling:** Students need to see and hear how the mind of a writer works. This includes the teacher modeling how writers come up with ideas for their writing and then select topics based on their audience. It also includes how writers revise and edit their writing in order to communicate clearly and appropriately with their audience.
- **Using mentor texts:** Teaching writing starts with giving students well-written texts. The importance of using mentor texts is in the analysis that naturally comes through the conversation that follows the reading, in the transaction with the text. As students note what a writer does well, they are, at the same time, creating a menu of options they can use in their own writing. (Anderson, 2014)

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: “Making the Most of Mentor Texts” by Kelly Gallagher
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr14/vol71/num07/Making-the-Most-of-Mentor-Texts.aspx>
Article explains the importance of using mentor texts to teach writing and includes strategies for their instructional use.
- Video: Teaching Students to Examine Craft Moves and Author’s intent in Mentor Persuasive Essay in Order to Support Revision (5-8) sponsored by the Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project
<http://vimeo.com/56066196>
Video provides an example of classroom instruction to improve argumentative writing by analyzing a mentor text.
- Providing choice: When students are able to choose their own writing topics, they are more apt to be passionate about writing. Another way to motivate students is to give them choices about their audience, such as writing to students in another grade or community, their peers, adults in the school or community, or others in the global community.
- Revising and editing: Students need to know that writing is a process. All writers continually revise and edit their work in order to make it more meaningful and clear for the reader. By revising for sentence structure and use of vocabulary, and editing for spelling and punctuation, students can learn not only the art of writing but the craft of writing as well.

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: “Argumentative v. Persuasive Writing”
<http://www.smekenseducation.com/argumentative-v-persuasive-writing.html>
Article explains the difference between argumentative and persuasive writing and strategies for teaching this difference. **(SECONDARY TEACHERS)**
- Document: Common Core Standards Appendix C
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_C.pdf
Document provides examples of writing for grades K-12 that can be used by teachers to norm on writing rubrics and to deepen their understanding of Colorado Academic Standards writing expectations.

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



- Document: Definitions of the Common Core Standards three text types of Writing Instruction
http://hedstromlanguagearts.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/9/8/10984081/6_la_cc_gps_3_writing_texts_explained.pdf
Document provides definitions for each writing type referenced in the Common Core State Standards.
 - Website: Reading Rockets
<http://www.readingrockets.org/reading-topics/writing>
Website provides strategies and materials for the teaching of writing. Included are videos and tips for parents in both English and Spanish.
 - Website: readwritethink (maintained by the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English)
<http://www.readwritethink.org/>
Website provides instructional resources specific to many aspects of literacy development and instruction, including a variety of suggestions for the teaching of writing.
 - Video: Analyzing Texts Putting Thoughts on Paper Grade 5
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/analyzing-text-writing>
Video shows students responding to a text by analyzing an author’s viewpoint with scaffolds for ELL learners.
- **Speaking.**
 - **Listening skills.**

Speaking and listening skills are essential components of communication. The ability to communicate effectively and purposefully affects students’ academic performance, relationships, and their preparation for college and career. Providing opportunities for students to engage in conversations, in small- or large-group settings, does not automatically result in their development of these literacy skills. Rather, students need instruction that includes models and application of effective speaking and listening skills in order to clearly articulate their thinking through oral communication.

To ensure that every student is college and career ready, the Colorado Department of Education identifies the following expectations in oral expression and listening:

- Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others, and contribute ideas to further the group’s attainment of an objective.
- Deliver organized and effective oral presentations for diverse audiences and varied purposes.
- Use language appropriate for purpose and audience.
- Demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening.

Learn more about Colorado’s standards in reading, writing, and communicating at:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/coreadingwriting/rwc_standards_organization#sthash.YBPvgHJe.dpuf

Strategies for integrating speaking and listening skills:

- **Interviews:** Students are given a specific topic to research, such as “The importance of writing in the workplace or media.” Students might interview individuals who work for the local newspaper or television station or even song writers or other authors to learn about the process they use when writing. Students in a reading class might interview individuals based on the time period being studied, or they might take on the role of a character in a text and be interviewed by their peers. Students should have opportunities to write a mixture of open and closed questions for their interviews, then synthesize their findings and share them with the class.
- **Debates:** Students are divided into groups. The teacher presents a proposition connected to the topic being taught, such as, “Macbeth was not solely responsible for his actions.” Students in one group argue for the proposition and the others against it. Students should be given time to prepare so they can

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



develop their reasons with evidence and examples to make their case. The teacher needs to establish guidelines and time limits for each side to argue its case while the other side listens. The activity might conclude with each side evaluating the other's case or with a writing assignment in which each student presents an individual argument.

- *Paired talk:* Students are asked a question that is open ended or has multiple correct responses which they discuss with a peer. The teacher can support students' speaking and listening skills by modeling the vocabulary and academic talk they are expected to use. By listening to others, they can refine their ideas by building on the thoughts of others.

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: "More than Words: Developing Core Speaking and Listening Skills" by Jessica Roake and Laura Varlas
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/dec13/vol55/num12/More-than-Words@-Developing-Core-Speaking-and-Listening-Skills.aspx>
Article explains the importance of integrating speaking and listening instructional strategies.
- Website: Speaking and Listening sponsored By Teaching Ideas
http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/contents_speakinglistening.htm
Website provides strategies for teaching speaking and listening skills. **(ELEMENTARY TEACHERS)**

Refer to these internal resources for additional information:

- Sentence Starters for Teaching Students Accountable Talk
Document provides sentence starters for teaching students how to communicate in academic conversations.
- Listening Skills
Document describes the process of active listening and provides ideas for teaching the skill of listening.

See also Standard III, Element G.

Engages students in instruction that is:

- **Purposeful.**
- **Explicit.**
- **Systematic.**

Instruction that is purposeful, explicit, and systematic is focused on a specific learning objective that is communicated to students. The teacher provides purpose for student learning by explicitly connecting the objective to students' prior knowledge, future learning, other disciplines, and/or life experiences. Students understand why they are learning a specific skill or concept and how it impacts their lives.

Key concepts are labeled in a clear and concise manner so students can focus on the most important concepts or ideas they need to master. The teacher avoids introducing random facts or ideas that are not connected to the learning objective and can confuse students.



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

When the teacher breaks down the key concepts into manageable parts in a sequential and systematic manner, it allows students to build success with each part in order to develop mastery of the content. By teaching each part systematically, and assessing along the way, the teacher is better equipped to identify misconceptions and adjust instruction during the learning process.

The teacher who engages students in purposeful, explicit, and systematic instruction is intentional about each decision made. The instructional methods implemented, the materials utilized, and the tasks in which students will engage are strategically selected and used in a purposeful manner that supports and enhances student learning and independence.

See also Standard I, Element D.



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