

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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PARTIALLY PROFICIENT RATING LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

Makes complex reading accessible to students by:

Why do students need to read complex text?

Text complexity on ACT's Reading tests (the ACT, PLAN, and EXPLORE; covering grades 12, 10 and 8 respectively) was divided into three levels of complexity: *uncomplicated*, *more challenging*, and *complex*. In looking at scores based on this complexity gradient, the following was found:

1. Students scoring below the benchmark (49% of the 568,000 taking the test) scored *no better than chance* on multiple-choice items associated with complex text, the most challenging of the three levels.
2. Only students who obtained nearly perfect scores (35 out of 36) did as well on complex text as they did on the less challenging text, indicating that a significant number of students who met the benchmark still scored relatively poorly on complex text. (Liben, 2010, p. 1)

To prepare students for college and careers, research shows they need to be able to comprehend complex texts in a variety of genres. Supporting students with this skill is the responsibility of all teachers.

Refer to this external resource for additional information:

- Article: "The Challenge of Challenging Text" by Timothy Shanahan, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/The-Challenge-of-Challenging-Text.aspx>
Article provides an explanation for what makes a text challenging with references to Common Core State Standards expectations.
- ***Adjusting content to students' skill levels.***

To effectively make complex reading accessible to all students, the teacher will need to recognize which students need instruction on prerequisite skills in order to be successful with the content being taught and which students have already mastered skills and need to move ahead. The teacher also needs to be knowledgeable of students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and make adjustments to the content accordingly.

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 this 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/>



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Website provides strategies to help second-language speakers' access complex texts in math, science, social studies, and language arts.

See also Standard III, Element A.

- ***Integrating literacy skills and knowledge into lessons.***

This practice requires the teacher to not only have an understanding of literacy content and skills, but to integrate this knowledge into lessons in such a way that it enhances students' abilities to access complex texts.

Literacy skills include:

- Phonological awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Fluency
- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening

Refer to these external resources for additional information:

- Article: "The Case for Informational Text" by Nell K. Duke
http://www.arp.sprnet.org/inserv/READING/case_for_informational_text.htm
Article explains the importance of using informational text with students and describes strategies the teacher can use to support students reading and comprehension.
- Article: "Ways to Teach Informational Text" by Barbara A. Marinak and Linda b. Gambrell
<http://www.personal.psu.edu/bam234/SSYL%20Informational%20Text.pdf>
Article is published by the National Council for the Social Studies and describes ways all teachers can teach students to comprehend informational text.
- Document: Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Appendix A
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf
Document explains the importance of using complex texts in content areas to support student success with the Common Core State Standards.
- Video: Teaching Reading Comprehension through Content Areas
<http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol8/806-video.aspx> or
http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=580
Video explains how the teaching of comprehension of compare and contrast was integrated into the teaching of science concepts in a 2nd-grade lesson. Supporting documents available on 2nd Website referenced above.
- Video: Common Core in ELA/ Literacy: Shift 2: 6-12: Building Knowledge in the Disciplines
<http://www.engageny.org/resource/common-core-in-ela-literacy-shift-2-6-12-building-knowledge-in-the-disciplines>
Video addresses the benefits of secondary content area teachers using non-fiction texts to support students' literacy skills.
- Video: Common Core in ELA/ Literacy: Shift 1: PK-5: Balancing Informational Text and Literature
<http://www.engageny.org/resource/common-core-in-ela-literacy-shift-1-pk-5-balancing-informational-text-and-literature>
Video addresses the benefits of elementary teachers using non-fiction texts to support students' literacy skills.



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○ ***Providing relevant content that addresses students' interests.***

When texts are selected that provide content relevant to students' interests, students are motivated to engage with the text and grapple with complex ideas and reading. When appropriate, students also need a choice in what they read, whether it be around book topics or choices of books related to a specific topic.

When the teacher takes the time to know students' interests and engages them in conversations on these topics, students feel that the teacher is interested in them and respects them. Teachers can use several methods to obtain information on their students' interests, such as:

- Interest inventories
- Student autobiographies
- Journaling
- Multiple intelligence surveys
- Learning style surveys

The website TextProject, Inc. offers the following acronym for helping the teacher provide relevant content (Hiebert, 2012).

Creating Connections: KNOWS

- K** Did I draw on students' existing *knowledge* and experience?
- N** Did I identify what *new knowledge* can be gained from this text and guide students in gaining it?
- O** Did I support students in *organizing* their new knowledge with their existing knowledge/experiences?
- W** Did I show students ways to *widen* their knowledge?
- S** Did I support students in *sharing* their knowledge?

See also Standard II, Element C.



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