

Teacher Quality Standard II

Teachers establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students.

The most important action an effective teacher takes at the beginning of the year is creating a climate for learning.
—Mary Beth Blegan, former U.S. Department of Education teacher-in-residence

A positive classroom environment enhances the academic achievement of all students, promotes appropriate classroom behavior, and is welcoming to families and adults. A respect for diversity and the uniqueness of each individual is valued. A sense of community is created in which members encourage and promote the learning of each other through collaboration, communication, and mutual respect as they work to achieve individual and common goals.

Element B

Teachers demonstrate a commitment to and respect for diversity, while working toward common goals as a community and as a country.

To be effective, teachers must treat the culture, heritage, and language of all their students con respeto.
—Eva Midobuche

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in demonstrating a commitment to and respect for diversity, an environment in which diversity is respected and used to further student learning must be created. By using instructional strategies, activities, and materials that reflect students' backgrounds and value their individual contributions, teachers establish a sense of community in which student interactions are positive and common goals can be established.

ACCOMPLISHED AND EXEMPLARY RATING LEVELS

The impact of a proficient implementation of the professional practices referenced in Element B will be students who demonstrate respect for the uniqueness of their fellow students and actively seek a variety of perspectives when completing group assignments.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: STUDENTS:

- **Respect the uniqueness of fellow students.**
- **Seek a variety of perspectives to complete group assignments.**

Classroom Examples

Elementary reading, writing and communicating: Students are working on Colorado Academic Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening, Grade Level Expectation—A clear communication plan is necessary to effectively deliver and receive information. *(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)*

Each day, the teacher and students in a 4th-grade classroom begin with a Morning Meeting. As part of the daily routine, students greet each other through song or words of welcome and handshakes. The teacher shares a celebration related to the group's progress towards a class goal. *(Establishes processes that result in: A sense of community among students. Common goals for all students.)* Students then partner and share a celebration or word of encouragement for each other. *(Establishes processes that result in: Effective interactions among students. Positive social relationships.)* Each day the teacher selects one student to share writing from her journal, a picture of her family, or an artifact related to her culture or family. *(Is welcoming to diverse family structures.)* The student can call on three peers to share comments or ask questions about what they shared for the purpose of



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learning more about the student’s family or culture or for connecting their experiences to that of their peers. *(Establishes processes that result in: Respect for individual differences.)*

Middle school reading, writing and communicating: Students are working on Colorado Academic Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes, Grade Level Expectation 2—Quality comprehension and interpretation of literary texts demand self-monitoring and self-assessment. *(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)*

To introduce a unit on poetry, an 8th-grade teacher creates a bulletin board of pictures/photographs of poets from diverse cultures and backgrounds. He purposefully selects poets that are representative of the cultures and backgrounds of the students. During instruction, the teacher and students read poems written by the poets and analyze them for the use of figurative language. *(Creates a classroom environment in which diversity is used to further student learning. Uses instructional approaches and materials that reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences.)* Students work in collaborative groups to compare the different poets’ use of figurative language. They read short biographies on each poet and analyze how the poet’s culture and background impacted the language used. During group discussions, the teacher reminds students to use stems for *accountable* talk so they can ensure each group member’s ideas are heard and respected. *(Acknowledges the value of each student’s contributions to the quality of lessons. Establishes processes that result in: Respect for individual differences.)* Each group sets goals for how it will work cooperatively to complete the task. At the end of each lesson, the teacher has each group reflect on its progress towards its goal and its work on the task as it connects to the rubric for the assignment. *(Establishes processes that result in: Effective interaction among students. Positive social relationships. Common goals for all students.)*

High school world languages (Spanish): Students are working on the Colorado Academic Standard 2: Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures, Grade Level Expectation 1—Analyze how the perspectives of people who speak the target language are reflected in their practices. *(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)*

Students are working on language and culture projects. A common goal for all students is to understand more fully how elements of a given culture interrelate and form a distinct personality of people. *(Creates a classroom environment in which diversity is used to further student learning. Establishes processes that result in: Common goals for all students.)* Students will explore the culture of Spain by writing travel guides, making videos, filming documentaries, or presenting dramas. They will investigate history, religion, economics, celebrations, geography, education, climate, literature, language structure, and how those elements are interrelated. Although the students have a number of product requirements laid out for them, they will add some of their own criteria for success. *(Acknowledges the value of each student’s contributions to the quality of lessons.)* Students may conduct research on their own but will work in collaborative groups to discuss how their research is connected and impacts the culture of the people. The teacher provides guidelines for group discussions to ensure each student shares his findings and contributes to the discussion. *(Establishes processes that result in: Effective interaction among students. Positive social relationships.)*

Three students in the class are advanced in their grasp of Spanish because language is a high talent area for them; for two students, Spanish is their first language. These students will work with the same concepts as the other students in the class, and, to stretch their thinking, they will do cross-cultural comparisons. They will examine elements of language and culture across at least three language groups other than Spanish, none of which can be a modern Romance language. The students will examine languages, such as Swahili, Farsi, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, and Russian, as well as the cultures from which those languages arise. *(Uses instructional approaches and materials that reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences. Students seek a variety of perspectives to complete group assignments.)* (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 88).



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

Planning/Coaching Questions

- How will I obtain information on my students' cultures, backgrounds, and family structures?
- What instructional approaches and materials can I use that reflect my students' backgrounds and enhance student learning?
- How will I ensure each student's contributions to the lesson are valued?
- How will I create an environment that is welcoming to diverse family structures?
- How will I develop a sense of community within the classroom?
- How will I provide opportunities for students to engage in effective interactions with their peers and develop positive social relationships?
- How will I model a respect for individual differences and ensure students do the same?
- How will I support students in establishing common goals?



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