

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 C

Teachers engage students as individuals with unique interests and strengths.

Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

—Chickering & Gamson

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in engaging students as individuals, they should be utilizing information from results of student interest inventories or surveys, etc. and implementing lessons that reflect these interests. Students must be encouraged to expand and enhance their learning through the use of challenging questions that are appropriately scaffolded. Teachers also acknowledge students' accomplishments and implement lessons that support all students in participating in class activities.

BASIC RATING LEVEL

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

- ***Implements lessons that reflect student interests.***

Interest is a great motivator for learning. Interest can refer to a topic or skill that taps into a student's talents, experiences, or dreams. It can be an area of current passion for the student. It can also refer simply to ideas, skills, or work that is appealing to a student. The term might also be used to think about new possibilities a student could encounter in the classroom that would be a source of future interests. Whatever the source, students become more invested and engaged in learning that reflects their interests.

By eliciting student interests and opinions, teachers create an environment in which all parties are appreciated and respected. Like everyone, students want to feel that they are “known” — that others understand them, appreciate them, and recognize their unique qualities, skills, interests, needs, and personalities. Teachers who understand this and consciously find ways to demonstrate their interest in students will build a stronger foundation for effective classroom management and learning. (Marzano, 2007)



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Human beings want to be known by others. When someone takes the time to know another's interests and engages in conversation on these topics, it is interpreted as an indication of interest and respect. Teachers can use a variety of methods to obtain information on their students, such as:

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

Refer to these internal resources to determine students' interests:

- [Determining Your Learning Preference](#)
- [Interest Inventory for Students](#)
- [Interest Survey on a Content Topic](#)
- [Multiple Intelligence Survey for Elementary Students](#)
- [Multiple Intelligence Survey for Secondary Students](#)



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