

## 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.

#### **PROFICIENT RATING LEVEL**

##### **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:**

- **Asks appropriately challenging questions of all students.**

Questions that challenge students require them to think beyond just a recall of facts. Challenging questions ask students to process information on all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. As the teacher plans for these questions, he must consider the critical elements of the content students need to master, the age of the student, and the needs of each student. Questions that challenge students may vary depending on a student's academic needs, language needs, or experiences. Therefore, planning questions prior to instruction is critical for a teacher to be proficient in this professional practice.

*See also Standard III, Element E.*

*Refer to this external resource for additional information:*

- Article: "IPADS4Teaching H.O.T.S for Bloom's" by Kathy Schrock  
<http://www.ipads4teaching.net/hots-for-blooms.html>  
Article provides ideas for teaching higher order thinking skills and incorporating technology in a manner that enhances student learning.



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

*Refer to this internal resource for additional information:*

- Bloom’s Taxonomy Question Types

Document provides examples of verbs to use when planning for each question type. It should be noted that the use of the verbs alone will not generate challenging questions. Teachers need to plan for their use purposefully as it relates to the type of thinking students need to do.

- **Scaffolds questions.**

A sequence of questions is a continuous or connected series of directed inquiry. Questions can be sequenced in a variety of ways. For example, questions may be ordered from easy to difficult with attention to levels of thinking in Bloom’s Taxonomy. Questions can also be sequenced in order to scaffold understanding about the content. For example, in an inquiry-based lesson the teacher might begin with a higher order/essential question. (*Eagle County Schools Professional Practices Rubric, 2012, p. 35*)

Consistently, the literature on effective questioning has insisted that questioning sequences are far more effective in promoting student learning than any one type of question (Dantonio & Beisenherz, 2001, p. 37).

Examples of scaffolded questions:

Levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy Scaffold Questions for Financial Literacy

- What is a debit? What is a credit? (Remembering)
- How do you use debits and credits in journal entries? (Applying)
- How can you assess the importance of balancing a general ledger? (Evaluating)

Content-Focused, Inquiry-Based Scaffolded Questions:

- What is the impact of my fossil fuel consumption? (Evaluating)
  - What is a fossil fuel? (Remembering)
  - How much fossil fuel does it take to heat or cool my house? (Applying)
  - How can you calculate fossil fuel consumption? (Understanding)
- (*Eagle County Schools Professional Practices Rubric, 2012, p. 35*)

*See also Standard III, Element E.*

*Refer to this internal resource for additional information:*

- What Does it Mean to Scaffold Questions and Tasks

Document provides research related to the scaffolding of questions along with examples of scaffolded questions.

*Refer to this external resource for additional information:*

- Video: Spiral Questions to Provoke Thinking  
<http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol4/418-video.aspx>

Video is an example of a middle school teacher scaffolding questions in order to deepen students’ understanding of natural disasters.

- **Gives wait time equitably.**

Mary Budd Rowe, Professor of Science Education at the University of Florida, discovered that the only difference between classes in which students posed questions and those classes in which they didn’t was the amount of “**wait time**” provided by a teacher. She went on to identify two types of wait time used by effective questioners:

- Wait Time 1 – after asking a question, before designating a student to answer;
- Wait Time 2 – after a student responds, before the teacher reacts or comments.



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

Subsequent research has confirmed that when teachers use adequate wait time (3-5 seconds) that students give longer responses, give evidence for their ideas and conclusions, speculate and hypothesize, ask more questions, and answer with more confidence. (Walsh & Sattes, 2005, p. 81)

The effective teacher models and labels wait time for students so they begin to provide this for their peers. Students learn that everyone does not process at the same rate or in the same manner. When students learn to provide each other with wait time, the depth of class discussions and student-to-student interactions can increase, resulting in increased learning for all.

Benefits of wait time for students:

- The number of their “I don’t know” and no answer responses decreases.
- The number of volunteered appropriate answers by students greatly increases.
- The scores of students on academic achievement tests tend to increase.

Benefits of wait time for teachers:

- Teachers tend to use more varied and flexible questioning strategies.
  - Teachers ask questions that require more complex processing and higher-level thinking.
  - Teachers are able to accurately assess more students due to increase in student responses and processing time.
- **Ensures that all students participate in class activities.**

Walk into any school, and you can hear teachers discussing their frustration with students who don’t complete work or participate in class. Teachers can support student participation by asking the following reflective questions:

- Has the content or skill been taught clearly so that students can be successful?
- Have possible misconceptions been addressed?
- Is sufficient time being provided for students to successfully complete the task?
- Are students clear on routines and procedures for getting help when needed?
- Are classroom resources available to support student independence with the task?
- How am I assessing students and providing feedback on progress and next steps?

When teachers have addressed the above questions and established a classroom culture in which all students feel respected and valued as learners ([reference Standard II, Element A](#)), strategies can be implemented that hold students accountable for participating in class activities.

Holding students accountable to engage in class activities communicates the expectation that all students are capable of success, that everyone has something important to contribute, and that effort is valued as much as ability.

*Refer to this internal resource for additional information:*

- Accountability Strategies  
Document describes strategies that can provide accountability for students to respond to questions and participate in class discussions.

*See also Standard III, Element E.*



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