Teacher Quality Standard III

Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students.

Study after study shows the single most important factor determining the quality of the education a child receives is the quality of the teacher. Quality teachers have knowledge of content, curriculum, and standards. They are able to plan and implement instructional strategies in an effective and purposeful manner that enhances student learning and independence. Research shows that when implemented effectively and purposefully, the professional practices referenced in Standard III can result in an environment in which all students can learn and succeed.

Element B

Teachers plan and consistently deliver instruction that draws on results of student assessments, is aligned to academic standards and advances students' level of content knowledge and skills.

Effective assessment can motivate the unmotivated, restore the desire to learn, encourage students to keep learning, and ultimately increase student achievement.

—Richard Stiggins

Professional practices referenced under each element of the Rubric for Evaluating Colorado Teachers are cumulative. Therefore, for teachers to be proficient in delivering instruction that is aligned to academic standards and student assessment data, they must create specific student outcomes and monitor student performance in order to make necessary adjustments in their instructional planning as well as "in-the-moment" adjustments that support students in mastering learning objectives. Armed with knowledge of students' strengths and areas of need, teachers encourage and motivate students to take risks that increase their conceptual understanding of content and effective application of skills.

See also Standard III, Element H and Standard IV, Element A.

ACCOMPLISHED AND EXEMPLARY RATING LEVELS

The impact of a Proficient implementation of the professional practices referenced in Element B will be students who are willing to confer with the teacher in order to address their strengths and next steps. When students are able to initiate activities to support their own learning, they are more motivated to engage in the learning process and take academic risks.

Click here to go back to the table of contents and view the resource guide in its entirety.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: STUDENTS:

- ***Monitor their level of engagement.***
- ***Confer with the teacher to achieve learning targets.***
- ***Initiate activities to address their learning strengths and next steps.***
- ***Take academic risks.***

> The greatest value in formative assessment lies in the teacher and students making use of results to improve real-time teaching and learning at every turn. (Chappuis & Chappuis, 2008, para. 39)

Students need the tools and opportunities to self-monitor their progress towards mastery of learning objectives so they can identify their strengths and next steps. Teachers should aim for students to actively manage, evaluate, and understand their learning gains. As students become comfortable utilizing tools to monitor their learning and apply next steps, their confidence in taking academic risks increases.

Classroom Examples

Elementary reading, writing, and communicating: Students are working on Colorado Academic Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes, Grade Level Expectation 1—Strategies are needed to make meaning of various types of literary genres. ***(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)***

Third-grade students have been learning to identify characters, setting, and major events in a story they are reading. Assessment data show students have mastered identification of characters in stories they hear read and ones they read independently. Based on this information, the teacher develops a read-aloud lesson with the objective: Students will be able to describe the setting of a story using details.

The teacher builds on student knowledge by explaining the setting is where the story takes place. It is where the characters are found. ***(Aligns instruction with academic standards and student assessment results.)*** The assessment task is for students to draw the setting based on details provided in the story. ***(Has explicit student outcomes in mind for each lesson. Assesses required skills.)*** As students create their illustrations, the teacher circulates and confers with individuals on the details they included. During the conferences, she reminds students of the criteria (time of year, time of day, and three details found in the setting) for their work, which is displayed in kid-friendly language. ***(Has explicit student outcomes in mind for each lesson. Students confer with the teacher to achieve learning targets.)*** With her support, students refer to the criteria and apply them to their illustration to identify missing details in their illustration. ***(Students confer with the teacher to achieve learning objectives.)*** Students displaying an understanding of setting and the criteria required in their illustrations are given sentence strips and

Click here to go back to the table of contents and view the resource guide in its entirety.

encouraged to write a description of the setting using details in their illustration. As the teacher confers with these students, she asks questions that require students to explain why the setting was important to the story. ***(Encourages students to take academic risks. Makes sure students meet learning objectives while increasing mastery levels.)*** Students who do not have a grasp of the different seasons and/or characteristics of day and night receive additional support from the teacher through the use of examples. The teacher also adjusts instruction by reviewing the book to support students in identifying evidence of the setting. ***(Monitors instruction against student performance and makes real-time adjustments.)***

Elementary reading, writing, and communicating: Students are working on the Colorado Academic Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes, Grade Level Expectation 3—Knowledge of complex orthography (spelling patterns), morphology (word meanings), and word relationships to decode (read) multisyllabic words contributes to better reading skills.***(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)***

Fourth-grade students are identifying similes and metaphors in a poem. The lesson begins with students reviewing the definition of each. A student correctly defines simile and provides an example. Another student defines metaphor as "a mean thing to say" and a simile as a "nice thing to say." The teacher immediately recognizes the second child has misconceptions related to figurative language and adjusts instruction in order to clarify the meaning of similes and metaphors. The teacher provides an example of a simile and metaphor that is "nice" and one that could be viewed as "mean" as well as a non-example of a simile. By quickly making adjustments in the lesson, misconceptions related to the use of simile and metaphor are cleared prior to students identifying each in a poem. ***(Monitors instruction against student performance and makes real-time adjustments.)***

Middle school mathematics: Students are working on Colorado Academic Standard 1: Number Sense, Properties, and Operations, Grade Level Expectation 2: Formulate, represent, and use algorithms with positive rational numbers with flexibility, accuracy, and efficiency. ***(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)***

As he begins a 6th-grade math lesson, Mr. Martinez wants to get a quick snapshot of his students' understanding around number sense. As a warm-up activity, he writes a 9, 36, 54, and 81 on the board and poses the following questions to his students: "Which of these numbers is different from the others? Why?" Mr. Martinez uses open-ended questioning rather than asking students to tell him which number is a non-square so he can gain information on his students' thinking and understanding of square numbers. ***(Assesses required skills.)*** After allowing students time to think, he asks them if there is another number that is different. After more think time passes, Mr. Martinez tells the students to draw

Click here to go back to the table of contents and view the resource guide in its entirety.

a line on their papers to create an area where they will write down answers from other students that make sense to them. Students then share which numbers they think are different and why. He emphasizes the classroom is a "safe zone" and that everyone's thinking is important and valued. He encourages them to question their peers if they disagree and need a clearer explanation. ***(Students take academic risks.)*** One student comments that the 9 is different because it is the only single digit. Another student remarks that the 54 is different because it is the only non-square number. He applies this information to the planning of future lessons to ensure students' needs are met and grouping arrangements are appropriate. ***(Uses assessment results to guide adjustment to instruction.)*** (*Eagle County Schools Professional Practices Rubric*, 2012, p. 13. Used with permission.).

High school biology: Students are working on Colorado Academic Standard 2: Life science, Grade Level Expectation 7: Physical and behavioral characteristics of an organism are influenced to varying degrees by heritable genes, many of which encode instructions for the production of proteins. ***(Implements lesson plans based on: Colorado Academic Standards)***

The teacher presents the learning objective: Students will apply the principle of co-dominance to determine the parents of infants who were switched at birth. He begins by asking a series of questions to assess student understanding of genetic dominance, alleles, and blood types. Only one student is able to identify his blood type, and few can name more than two blood types. Based on student responses, the teacher stops his instruction and reviews blood types and how an individual's blood type is determined. This knowledge is critical for students to be successful with the lesson objective. ***(Monitors instruction against student performance and makes real-time adjustments.)***

Planning/Coaching Questions

- How will I ensure my assessments (formative and summative) are aligned with academic standards and student outcomes?
- How will I determine criteria for mastery of standards and student outcomes?
- How will I communicate the criteria for mastery to students?
- How will I utilize the results from assessments to make instructional decisions?
- At what points in the lesson will I need to check for student understanding?
- How will I increase mastery levels for students who master outcomes for the lesson? How will I know when students are ready for this?
- What will I need to do to establish a learning environment in which students feel confident to take academic risks?
- How can I model risk taking for my students?
- How will I plan opportunities to confer with students on their progress towards mastery of learning objectives?

What supports will students need in order to identify their strengths and next steps?

Click here to go back to the table of contents and view the resource guide in its entirety.