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.

PARTIALLY PROFICIENT rating level

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES: THE TEACHER:

- ○ *Aligns instruction with academic standards and student assessment results.*

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Colorado Academic Standards (http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/coloradostandards-academicstandards) are based on a trajectory of learning across grade levels and within a grade. For students to be successful with these standards, instruction at each grade must be aligned to the grade-level standards. A strong alignment to academic standards ensures students have opportunities to gain the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for success at subsequent grades as well as to be college and career ready.

Instruction that meets the needs of all students is not only aligned to academic standards but is also aligned to student assessment results. For teachers to implement instruction that is differentiated based on students' academic needs, assessment results must drive decisions, such as the choice of student tasks, use of strategies and materials, grouping arrangements, and use of vocabulary. As students make progress towards mastery of learning objectives, teachers should use assessment results to identify increasing levels of mastery.

- ○ ***Monitors instruction against student performance and makes real-time adjustments.***

    The greatest power of assessment information is its ability to help a teacher be more effective. When teachers know what students are and are not grasping at any given moment in a lesson, they know when to reteach, when to move ahead, and when to adjust instruction to explain concepts or skills in a different way. Informative assessment is not an end in itself, but the beginning of better instruction. (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 11)

With today's accountability standards, teachers may monitor instruction and notice misconceptions but feel pressured to get through the lesson material. Stopping to make real-time adjustments and clear up confusion can be a wise use of instructional time to ensure students are able to make progress towards desired outcomes. Real-time adjustments based on student performance also can save time re-teaching concepts or skills in a future lesson.

There are a variety of ways for teachers to make real-time adjustments based on student performance (oral and written):

- Providing examples or illustrations that correct student misconceptions.
- Providing additional modeling of a skill.
- Sharing student work that does and does not meet criteria for student outcomes.
- Adjusting the lesson to include additional instruction on prerequisite skills.
- Adjusting the lesson to exclude instruction on information or skills students already grasp.

○ ***Assesses required skills.***

If the purpose of assessment is to guide a teacher's instructional decisions during the planning process and throughout instruction, then assessments must be aligned to the skills students are expected to master. Otherwise, the information provided is of limited use to the teacher or student.

A professional practice referenced under Basic is, "The teacher has explicit student outcomes in mind for each lesson." Once a teacher has developed the student outcomes for a lesson, the next step is to develop assessments that assess these outcomes or required skills. Along with the development of assessments for a lesson, the teacher must also identify the criteria that will provide evidence of student mastery. Teachers may apply the following questions to support assessment development.

- What will I need to hear students say as evidence of their mastery of skills or concepts?
- What will I need to see students do as evidence of their mastery of skills or concepts?
- What will student work need to look like for it to provide evidence of mastery of skills or concepts?

For teachers to utilize student work and responses for instructional decisions, they must ensure their assessments are measuring mastery of the required skills and have clear criteria for student success. Without this, teachers lack the tool they need to make instructional adjustments that will support all students.