



English Language Arts Proficiency Guide for Teachers of Adult Education

Revised November 2019

A Companion to the
Massachusetts Professional Standards
for
Teachers of Adult Education

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Adult and Community Learning Services
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370

Acknowledgements

This document was developed by the SABES English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum and Instruction Professional Development Center. It is based primarily on the *MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education* (MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, MA ESE, 2017, revised 2019) and informed by the [ELA/Literacy professional development materials](#) created by the federal College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action project (Standards Work, Inc. for US Department of Education, 2016), the *Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult English Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL; MA ESE, 2014), and the *Mathematics Proficiency Guide for Adult Education* (MA ESE, 2019).

The final version incorporates work by national subject matter experts (SMEs) Amy R. Trawick, Mary E. Curtis, and Lorretta Holloway, as well as SABES ELA director Merilee Freeman, former SABES ELA staff member Carol DiGregorio, and ACLS Curriculum Specialist Jane Schwerdtfeger. National reviewers Mary Ann Corley and John Strucker, as well as reviewers from the Massachusetts adult education field including Jeanne Almanzar, Anna Fernandez-Buehrens, Sheila Murphy, Joan Schottenfeld, and Melissa Viscovich, provided important feedback in the later stages. Thank you also to ESE’s Adult and Community Learning (ACLS) staff member Patricia Hembrough for leading the development and piloting of the Massachusetts Educator Growth and Evaluation (EGE) Model, the *MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education* and the *MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education Indicators of Proficiency Rubric* (MA ESE, 2017, revised 2019)—and for providing substantive feedback on this document.

A special appreciation is offered to Amy R. Trawick for initial work as well as drafting and revising the final document.

Thank you to all who helped to bring this document to life.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
Relationship of the Proficiency Guide and the Educator Growth and Evaluation Model	6
Organization of the ELA Proficiency Guide	7
Suggestions for Using This Document.....	8
Where to Find Support.....	9
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN (K).....	10
Standard K1. Content, Theory, and Research	10
K1.1: Adult Basic Education.....	12
K1.2: Adult Teaching and Learning.....	14
Standard K2. Standards.....	14
K2.1: MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education	16
K2.2: College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (ABE).....	16
Research/Resources for the Professional Knowledge Domain.....	17
INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE DOMAIN (P).....	19
Standard P1. Design and Instruction.....	19
P1.1: Standards-based Units	22
P1.2: Well-structured Lessons.....	23
P1.3: Student Engagement.....	24
P1.4: Meeting Diverse Needs.....	25
Standard P2. Assessment.....	27
P2.1: Assessment Methods	29
P2.2: Modifying Instruction.....	30
P2.3: Student Progress	31
Research/Resources for the Instructional Practice Domain	32

THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT DOMAIN (C)	35
Standard C1. Growth Mindset	35
C1.1: High Expectations.....	36
C1.2: Student Ownership	37
C1.3: Lifelong Learning.....	37
Standard C2. Reflective Practice	38
C2.1: Self-assessment.....	39
C2.2: Goal Setting.....	40
C2.3: Professional Development.....	41
Research/Resources for the Continuous Improvement Domain.....	42

Introduction to the ELA Proficiency Guide

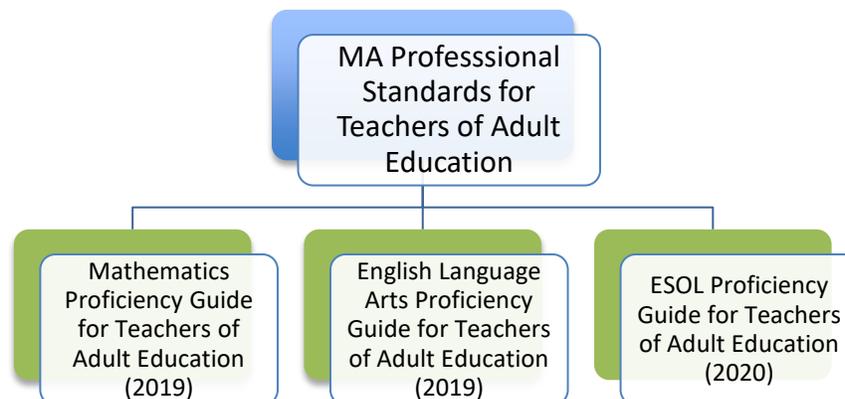
Effective teachers and leaders matter. No other program-based factor has as great an influence on student achievement as an effective teacher¹. Likewise, effective educational leaders foster the conditions that enable powerful teaching and learning to occur. Ensuring that every student is taught by effective teachers and attends an adult education program led by an effective program director is key to preparing all students for success.

This document, the *English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency Guide for Teachers of Adult Education*, hereafter referred to as the ELA Proficiency Guide, is one of several companion pieces to the [MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education](#) (2017, revised 2019). Three proficiency guides have been created, one each for ELA, mathematics, and ESOL (see Figure 1). This one serves as a resource for adult education English language arts teachers and their program directors. Teachers and directors arrive in adult education programs from a variety of entry points, which ultimately enriches the field and the learning experiences of their students. The ELA Proficiency Guide serves to focus this diverse set of educators on a common vision for ELA by specifying what teachers should know and be able to do related to adult ELA instruction.

The document is designed to be instrumental in:

- guiding the practice of new, developing, and advanced teachers who teach ELA to adult learners;
- fostering communities of practice among teachers and directors across the state by promoting a shared understanding of effective ELA practice; and
- advancing the professionalization of the adult education field in Massachusetts.

Figure 1. Relationship of the MA Professional Standards and the Proficiency Guides



¹ Hightower, A.M., Delgado, R.C., and Lloyd, S.C. (2011). [Improving student learning by supporting quality teaching](#). Editorial Projects in Education, Inc. Bethesda, MD 20814, p. 2; McCaffrey, J. R., Lockwood, D. F., Koretz, D. M., & Hamilton, L. S. (2003). [Evaluating value added models for teacher accountability](#) [Monograph]. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation; Rowan, B., Correnti, R., & Miller, R. J. (2002). "What large-scale survey research tells us about teacher effects on student achievement: Insights from the Prospects study of elementary schools." *Teachers College Record*, 104, 1525-1567.

Relationship of the ELA Proficiency Guide and the Educator Growth and Evaluation Model

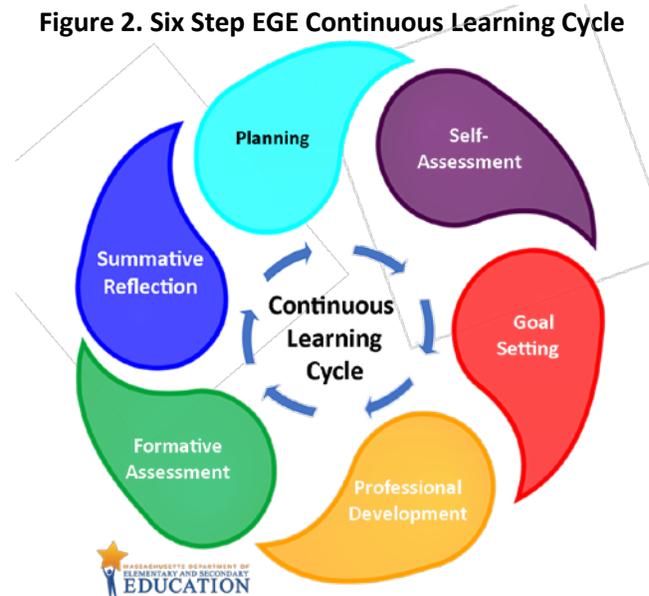
This document is designed to be used in conjunction with the Educator Growth and Evaluation (EGE) Model². The EGE Model is based on the *MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education*, hereafter referred to as the MA Professional Standards for Teachers, and was developed to support teachers and directors in reflecting upon and taking an active role in improving instructional practices. It is grounded in three key questions:

1. *Are students learning?*
2. *What is the teacher doing that contributes to and supports that learning?*
3. *What else might the teacher do to enhance student learning?*

The EGE Model guides teachers through a continuous learning cycle and provides a process that can be adopted or adapted according to local program and staff needs and resources (see Figure 2).

Like all effective initiatives, the EGE Cycle begins with a planning step that invites programs to learn about and tailor the EGE process to function effectively within the context of their own programs (Step 1). When the logistics are arranged and an EGE team leader ensures that supports are in place, the teacher and coach (an experienced teacher who has been selected to work with the teacher) begin working together. With the guidance of an experienced coach, the teacher reviews the MA Professional Standards and the relevant proficiency guide and reflects on their teaching and their professional learning goals (Step 2). Based on their reflection, teachers draft a professional learning plan that will anchor their professional development throughout the EGE Cycle (Step 3). With the support of the coach and EGE team leader, teachers seek out professional learning opportunities, implement new approaches, and reflect on the impact of their changed practice (Step 4). They meet with the coach periodically to assess their progress and receive support and encouragement (Step 5). At the end of the cycle, the teacher and coach review the cumulative evidence of applied learning, assess progress toward the professional learning goals, and determine next steps (Step 6).

Figure 2. Six Step EGE Continuous Learning Cycle



Within the EGE Model is a rubric based on the MA Professional Standards for Teachers that describes effective teaching practices. Because directors and supervisors typically work with teachers across

² This document is adapted from the K-12 one titled, *Massachusetts System of Educator Evaluation*, found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/>.

multiple content areas, the *Indicators of Proficiency Rubric* (MA ESE, 2017, revised 2019) is an optional reference tool that targets effective adult education teaching practices at the “macro” level with descriptions of effective teaching practices that apply to all content areas (English language arts, mathematics, and ESOL). The ELA Proficiency Guide serves as a bridge from these macro-level descriptions to ELA instruction, providing a clear road map for what these practices look like for ELA teachers.

Organization of the ELA Proficiency Guide

The structure of the ELA Proficiency Guide builds on the organization of the MA Professional Standards for Teachers, making explicit the relationship between the two (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. At-A-Glance: MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education

Professional Knowledge Domain (K)	Instructional Practice Domain (P)	Continuous Improvement Domain (C)
Standard K1. Content, Theory, and Research <i>Indicators</i> K1.1 Adult Basic Education K1.1 English for Speakers of Other Languages K1.2 Adult Teaching and Learning	Standard P1. Design and Instruction <i>Indicators</i> P1.1 Standards-based Units P1.2 Well-structured Lessons P1.3 Student Engagement P1.4 Meeting Diverse Needs	Standard C1. Growth Mindset <i>Indicators</i> C1.1 High Expectations C1.2 Student Ownership C1.3 Lifelong Learning
Standard K2. Standards <i>Indicators</i> K2.1 MA Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education K2.2 College & Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (ABE) K2.2 MA English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education (ESOL)	Standard P2. Assessment <i>Indicators</i> P2.1 Assessment Methods P2.2 Modifying Instruction P2.3 Student Progress	Standard C2. Reflective Practice <i>Indicators</i> C2.1 Self-assessment C2.2 Goal Setting C2.3 Professional Development

As mentioned before, proficiency guides have also been developed for mathematics and ESOL. Some components of the ELA Proficiency Guide are the same across all three content areas while others are unique to each content area.

For the following areas, the exact language from the MA Professional Standards for Teachers is used and applies to all content areas, not just ELA. Common components across all proficiency guides include:

- Domain:** Domains are the overarching categories of professional practices relevant to effective teaching in adult education contexts. There are three domains for teachers of adult education: *Professional Knowledge, Instructional Practice, and Continuous Improvement*.

- **Standard:** Standards are broad statements about the knowledge and behaviors of effective ELA practitioners. Each domain has two standards.
- **Indicator:** Indicators elaborate on specific aspects of a standard and serve as checkpoints to measure progress toward meeting that standard.

The following sections are not found in the MA Professional Standards for Teachers and are customized for each proficiency guide. Components specific to the ELA Proficiency Guide include:

- **Supporting Explanation for Each Standard:** A brief narrative introduces each standard, grounding the expectation in research and theory. The explanation provides an overview of why the standard and its indicators are relevant to ELA instruction and points practitioners to areas to explore in more depth.
- **What Effective ELA Teachers Know/Do:** These items provide concrete examples of the knowledge and skills needed by ELA teachers for each indicator. They are not meant to be exhaustive in scope.
- **Research/Resources for Each Domain:** At the end of the section for each domain is a list of articles, books, websites, and other online resources that practitioners might find helpful in furthering their own professional development in the specific area of ELA.
- **Glossary:** A glossary of key terms used in the ELA Proficiency Guide is a separate document that may be accessed online at <https://www.sabes.org/pd-center/ela>.

About Repeated Ideas

You will note as you progress through the ELA Proficiency Guide that some ideas are repeated across various items. For instance, *differentiation* is mentioned in several places. References to *culminating projects*, *text selection*, and *assessment* are also found multiple times. This redundancy is due to a number of factors:

- 1) Repetition of certain concepts were built into the MA Professional Standards for Teachers, upon which the proficiency guide is based.
- 2) Key concepts related to ELA instruction warrant repetition and reinforcement, so they become embedded in teaching.
- 3) Multiple reasons for using specific approaches in the ELA classroom often exist. For instance, using culminating projects is important because doing so:
 - requires the integration of CCRSAE ELA skills (K2.2),
 - provides a meaningful context and purpose for selecting, organizing, and teaching standards within a unit (P1.1),
 - provides vehicles for exploring cultural themes (P1.4), and
 - fosters student-to-student interaction and language production (P1.3).

Suggestions for Using This Document

Adult education teachers will find several ways this document can contribute to their teaching:

- Based on the MA Professional Standards for Teachers, the proficiency guide shows how the standards apply in the ELA classroom.
- The ELA Proficiency Guide reflects current research and understandings of what effective adult ELA teachers know and can do. Thus, teachers may use the proficiency guide to reflect on their own practice and skills. Such a self-assessment can be used to shape professional development plans and guide ways to collaborate with other practitioners.
- The resources provided may also help practitioners explore targeted topics in more depth.
- Ultimately, the goal is to improve and accelerate students' outcomes, and both the MA Professional Standards for Teachers and the ELA Proficiency Guide directly support the achievement of those outcomes.

For directors and evaluators, this document should be useful in the following ways:

- Directors may use it as a tool to aid in hiring, supervising, and evaluating staff.
- The ELA Proficiency Guide also provides guidance in helping directors and lead teachers facilitate collaborative efforts to enhance ELA instruction within their programs, targeting professional development activities that teachers might engage in as teams to enrich their experience and to build leadership.

Where to Find Support

Use of the ELA Proficiency Guide is intended to be supported by professional development and training. Teachers, directors, supervisors, and evaluators should pursue ongoing professional learning to stay current on new approaches, policies, and materials and to maintain collaborative networks statewide.

The [SABES ELA Curriculum and Instruction PD Center](#) is the state's go-to provider of high-quality professional development and resources aligned with the ELA Proficiency Guide. Offerings address standards-focused ELA instruction; level-appropriate evidence-based reading instruction (including training in the Student Achievement in Reading [STAR] initiative); evidence-based writing instruction; teaching the CCRSAE Speaking and Listening standards; and integrating Social Studies and Science into the ELA classroom. These may be accessed in online, face-to-face, and blended formats.

- For descriptions and currently scheduled offerings, visit <https://www.sabes.org/pd-center/ela>.
- For more information about the ELA Center, contact Merilee Freeman, Director, (508) 854-4296, mfreeman@qcc.mass.edu.

The [SABES Program Support Professional Development Center](#) provides support, guidance, and professional development to program directors and EGE team leaders to assist them in adopting and adapting the EGE Model according to needs and resources. Additional online resources and support related to the ELA Proficiency Guide are available through and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Office of Adult and Community Learning Services](#) (ACLS). All resources meet the states' [standards for high quality professional development](#) and incorporate current research and evidence-based instruction.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE DOMAIN (K)

Teachers draw on a body of professional knowledge, research, and standards to respond to the needs of their students within their educational contexts. Teachers have considerable knowledge of what they teach (i.e., mathematics, ELA, ESOL). They know and understand the content and underlying concepts relevant to what they teach. They understand what constitutes effective, developmentally appropriate teaching strategies and use this knowledge to make the content meaningful to students.

Teachers know their students well, including their diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. They know how the experiences that adult learners bring to the classroom affect their continued learning. They know how to structure their lessons to meet the social and intellectual development and characteristics of adult learners so they can succeed academically.

STANDARD K1: Content, Theory, and Research

Knows the subject matter well, understands how adults learn, and draws upon relevant theories and research in adult education. Applies this knowledge to the design of rigorous learning experiences that enable students to acquire increasingly complex knowledge and skills.

Supporting Explanation for Standard K1

The teacher of English Language Arts (ELA) knows how to read, write, speak, and listen at high levels of proficiency. But effective ELA teachers also know how to *teach* language and literacy skills and practices. They are familiar with the research (e.g., National Research Council [NRC], 2012) in teaching reading, writing, oral communication, and digital literacy to adults and understand how to make hidden processes (like thinking and comprehension) visible and concrete.

In addition, effective ELA teachers realize that all the areas of English language arts instruction—reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language—are integrated when put to use in adult tasks outside the classroom. Therefore, these instructors provide opportunities for students to integrate the ELA skills inside the classroom, where the teachers can provide the necessary scaffolding.

Effective ELA teachers also understand how the research is interpreted through state and federal policies. For instance, at the federal level, WIOA requires that Adult Education programs provide to learners at all instructional levels explicit and systematic instruction in the four essential components of reading (alphabeticity, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension). In Massachusetts, that means ABE programs use evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI), specifically, to teach these essential components. EBRI refers to those instructional approaches to reading that are based in rigorous research and professional wisdom. Teachers of intermediate-level readers (GLE 4-8) are trained in STAR, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). Teachers at the other levels should participate in EBRI training through the SABES ELA Center.

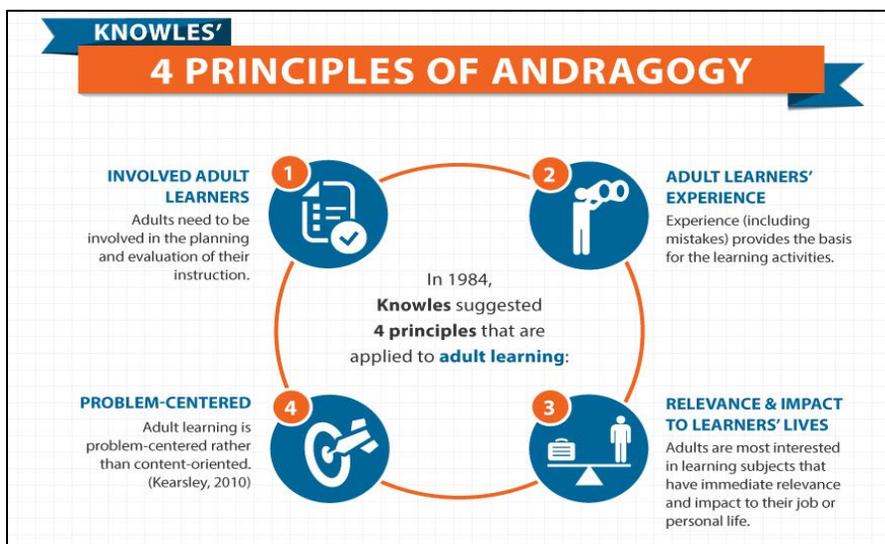
Effective ELA teachers are also familiar with evidence-based research in teaching writing and oral communication and use explicit instruction and ongoing practice to effectively promote development of specific skills. In a world increasingly dependent on technology, adult educators support their learners in developing digital literacy. Digital literacy can be defined as the ability to use technology to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information. Although all teachers play a role in incorporating digital literacy into their instruction, ELA teachers appreciate their unique responsibility to stay up-to-date on instructional techniques that cultivate digital literacy skills. Find out more in the [ACLS Curriculum and Instruction policy](#).

Key to being an effective ELA teacher of adults is remembering that teaching adults is different from teaching children. Effective ELA teachers are attuned to instructional approaches that may be appropriate for K-12 students but are not necessarily applicable to adult education, especially without adaptation. The explanations for the low literacy levels of adult literacy learners can be more complex than those for children. Previous lack of or interrupted schooling as well as trauma, past or current homelessness, substance abuse, learning disabilities, or erratic and idiosyncratic sub-skill development may interact to create individual literacy profiles that challenge literacy learning in adulthood.

Adult learning theory can help tease out what is appropriate and what is not when making decisions about possible instructional approaches. Malcolm Knowles (1984) popularized the notion that *andragogy*, the art and science of helping adults learn, is different from *pedagogy*, the teaching of children. We can assume, for instance, that adults have accumulated a good deal of knowledge from their family, community, and workplace experiences and that these can be (but not always are) assets when approaching new learning. Other assumptions that andragogy makes about adults include that the adult:

- Moves from dependency to increasing self-directedness as he/she matures and can direct his/her own learning.
- Draws on his/her accumulated reservoir of life experiences to aid learning.
- Is ready to learn when he/she assumes new social or life roles.
- Is problem-centered and wants to apply new learning immediately.
- Is motivated to learn by internal, rather than external, factors (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 19)

Figure 4. Knowles' Principles of Andragogy



<http://elearninginfographics.com/adult-learning-theory-andragogy-infographic>

In general, andragogy suggests that adult educators should honor the experience that adult learners bring to the classroom, ensure that learners see the immediate relevance to their job or personal life, organize learning around problems/projects instead of decontextualized content, and involve adult learners in planning and evaluating their learning (Knowles, 1984). See **Figure 4**.

Although effective ELA teachers draw from the work of Knowles, they understand its limitation. For instance, some adults come from cultures that expect teachers to take more of a traditional role in the classroom, and they may be resistant to approaches where teachers use more of a problem/project-based approach. In these cases, effective ELA teachers explain the rationale for the approach clearly and explicitly teach steps in complicated processes. Another issue is that some students may not have the literacy skills or the abilities to manage their own learning. In these cases, effective ELA teachers understand that they need to scaffold learning and instruction to meet the needs of their learners, adapting approaches to ensure that all students are successful.

Indicator K1.1. Adult Basic Education
 Demonstrates knowledge of current research and a comprehensive understanding of the underlying concepts, procedural knowledge, and contextualized application of the subject matter by engaging students in evidence-based instruction that enables them to acquire increasingly complex knowledge and skills.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. WIOA requires that evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) be used with students at all student reading levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use the most relevant EBRI techniques for each of the four components of reading (alphabeticity, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), based on results of diagnostic assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginner (GLE 0-3) – prioritize alphabeticity and fluency ○ Intermediate (GLE 4-8) – use approaches from the STAR Reading Initiative ○ Advanced (GLE 9-12) – prioritize vocabulary and comprehension 	
b. The differences between informational and literary texts, their structures, and their importance in academic and non-academic settings need to be taught.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage students in using, analyzing, and distinguishing among the purposes and organizational structures of written arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narrative texts. ● Have students, through discussion and writing, evaluate how well authors support claims with verifiable facts, valid reasoning, and relevant and sufficient evidence. ● Engage students in reading common literary genres (<i>e.g., novel, short story, poem, drama</i>) and identifying, analyzing, critiquing, and appreciating the authors’ use of literary techniques (<i>e.g., simile, metaphor, idioms</i>) and overall craft. 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
c. Writing develops over time, both in terms of developing skills and in terms of creating individual products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster a writing community among students that encourages sustained, engaging, and consistent writing routines. • Design learning experiences that lead students through the stages of the writing process (<i>e.g., planning/organizing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing authentic compositions</i>). 	
d. Language instruction requires a working knowledge of standard English conventions and the evidence-based strategies for teaching grammar and conventions to students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight differences in language use in terms of appropriateness or “standard,” not “correctness” (<i>e.g., point out that standard English is the English dialect of choice in college, many careers, and mainstream society.</i>) • Demonstrate how ideas within and across sentences connect to each other through their grammar (<i>e.g., modifying words and phrases, signal words</i>). • Integrate grammar instruction with authentic language experiences (<i>e.g., peer-editing for Standard English usage; students use/find specific elements in their own writing</i>). • Provide explicit instruction and ample practice with combining sentences and imitating model sentences, as appropriate. 	
e. Learners, even native-born English speakers, require explicit instruction and practice in oral communication, collaboration, and presentation skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide modeling, scaffolding, and practice with the speaking and listening skills needed for effective adult oral communication. • Regularly engage students in speaking in informal, collaborative, and formal contexts. 	
f. Sophisticated language users apply cognitive and metacognitive strategies to accomplish reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks; these strategies are not automatically used by less-developed language users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage learners in thinking, writing, and talking about their own thinking as it relates to specific literacy tasks in the classroom (<i>e.g., through journals, logs, class conversations</i>). • Explain, model, and provide practice in specific strategies for reading comprehension (<i>e.g., margin notes, self-questioning, summarizing</i>), writing (<i>e.g., graphic organizers, outlines, editing checklists</i>), and speaking/listening (<i>e.g., using/taking notes, asking questions</i>). • Invite students to experience and compare different strategies in terms of effectiveness in meeting reading goals (not because the activity is “fun”). 	
g. Meaningful, authentic tasks/projects require adult learners to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and use evidence-based instructional practices that support the development of complementary skills (<i>e.g., writing-to-learn strategies that improve reading</i> 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
integrate reading, writing, and oral language in ways that thoughtfully address purpose, context, and audience.	<p><i>comprehension; reading, evaluating, and analyzing texts to inform research papers; analyzing a literary genre to then write in that genre; reading to participate in a group discussion).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate reading, writing, and oral language tasks that address a range of audiences and purposes, including building content knowledge in history/social studies, science, math, and career education. • Design authentic culminating unit projects that require the application of CCRSAE ELA skills. 	

Indicator K1.2. Adult Teaching and Learning

Demonstrates knowledge of current research and a comprehensive understanding of andragogy and the learning processes of adults. Designs engaging learning experiences that honor the life experiences of adult learners.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Adult learners vary greatly in their proficiency levels and in the underlying reasons for these levels, so diagnostic assessment, scaffolding, and practice are especially important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess student strengths and needs. (See Standard 2. Assessment). • Use assessment results and CCRSAE to inform level-appropriate instruction. • Provide structured, evidence-based instruction including explicit instruction and a variety of opportunities for individual practice/application. 	
b. Many adult learners have experienced failure with previous schooling, resulting in negative attitudes and anxiety about ELA learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create learning environments where students can gain confidence in their ability to learn by succeeding with tasks that require productive struggle. • Develop non-judgmental learning environments that value mistakes and misunderstandings as ways to deepen learning. 	
c. Adult learners need to see the relevance of new skills to their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore topics of interest and relevance to the learners in the classroom. • Apply new CCRSAE ELA skills in authentic texts/projects. • Integrate use of digital tools and resources as an authentic part of instruction in academic content. 	

STANDARD K2: Standards

Draws upon a comprehensive knowledge of adult education state standards for teaching and learning. Applies this knowledge to the design and implementation of rigorous units with lessons and learning experiences that enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for postsecondary education, training, and careers.

Supporting Explanation for Standard K2

Massachusetts Adult Education has two sets of standards that all ELA teachers should know and use. One describes **teacher** knowledge and behavior while the other describes **student** knowledge and behavior. The MA Professional Standards for Teachers (2019) describes what practitioners should know and be able to do as effective teachers in the classroom. They are based on the MA standards for teachers in grades K-12 and have been piloted in a range of adult education programs. The MA Educator Growth and Evaluation (EGE) Model (2019) is aligned with the MA Professional Standards for Teachers, so it is important for adult education practitioners to be familiar with them. The *English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency Guide for Adult Education* (this document) supports practitioners in customizing the more general MA Professional Standards for Teachers to the teaching of language and literacy.

The second set of standards that guides the work of ELA teachers is the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* (CCRSAE; Pimentel, 2013). These content standards for students provide guidance for what learners at each NRS³ level should know and be able to do in the areas of reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language in order to be prepared for postsecondary education, family-sustaining employment, and civic life. Also adapted from work in K-12, the CCRSAE were adopted by ACLS for ABE and ESOL instruction in 2013. ELA curricula and instruction in programs throughout the state should now be aligned with the CCRSAE and integrate the three instructional shifts prompted by the content standards: 1) engaging students with appropriately complex text, 2) focusing on evidence, and 3) building knowledge.

³ NRS is an acronym for the National Reporting System for Adult Education.

Indicator K2.1. Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education

Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the state standards for teachers of adult learners through engagement in an educator growth and evaluation process. Uses the Proficiency Guides to support effective instructional practice and to implement learning experiences that facilitate learners' achievement.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Professional standards provide clear guidance for adult education teachers about what the state and individual programs expect, related to curriculum, instruction, and academic rigor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect the MA Professional Standards for Teachers, the ELA Proficiency Guide, and the EGE Model. • Use the ELA Proficiency Guide to understand what effective teaching looks like in ELA classrooms. • Participate in program activities and state-level professional development that enhance understanding of the ELA Proficiency Guide. 	

Indicator K2.2. College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRS AE)

Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the CCRSAE anchor and level-specific standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice by aligning instruction to the appropriate standards at Levels A through D-E. Instruction regularly reflects the instructional shifts for English language arts/literacy or mathematics, depending on the content being taught.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. The CCRSAE provide clear guidance for adult education ELA teachers about the basic skills required for students to participate fully in the workplace, in college and training settings, and in civic life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the narrative information accompanying the CCRSAE ELA standards to understand what they are, where they come from, and what they should accomplish. • Annually participate in program activities and state-level professional development that enhance understanding of the CCRSAE ELA standards, the instructional shifts, and standards-based instruction. 	
b. ABE programs and teachers must use curriculum that matches the demands of the CCRSAE for ELA/literacy from Levels A through D-E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitually review the same anchor standard across CCRSAE levels A-E to understand the developmental continuum and use it to differentiate instruction according to the levels of the students in the classroom. • Track lessons and units to ensure the full range of ELA standards for a level are being taught. • Develop/adapt systems and templates to ensure that the CCRSAE ELA standards and instructional shifts are the focus of instruction. 	

Research/Resources for the Professional Knowledge Domain

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INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE DOMAIN (P)

Teachers operate effectively at all stages of the teaching and learning cycle, including planning learning experiences, delivering effective instruction, conducting formative assessments, providing feedback on student learning, and reflecting on and modifying practices as needed. Teachers have a repertoire of effective instructional strategies and use them to implement engaging, well-designed lessons with defined outcomes. They use technology to facilitate learning (e.g., providing extended practice, collaboration, differentiation) and expand their students' abilities with technology. Teachers design and implement engaging lessons based on well-defined learning objectives and use evidence-based instructional strategies that promote deep learning, problem solving, and the transfer of learning across authentic contexts.

Teachers regularly evaluate student progress to measure the effectiveness of their instruction and to ensure they are meeting the professional standards and the learning needs of their students. They interpret and use student data to assess progress, diagnose barriers to learning, and challenge students to improve their performance.

STANDARD P1: Design and Instruction

Uses knowledge of the adult education state standards to guide the design of academically rigorous instruction that makes knowledge and skills accessible to all students and facilitates mastery of adult learning standards. Incorporates a variety of differentiated instructional methods that engage adult learners in challenging but accessible tasks, support the development of critical thinking, and accommodate diverse needs.

Supporting Explanation for Standard P1

As a whole, the CCRSAE for ELA/Literacy invites teachers to integrate into their units and lessons three instructional shifts:

- Complexity (i.e., regular practice with complex text and its academic language),
- Evidence (i.e., reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational), and
- Knowledge (i.e., building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction).

(Pimentel, pp. 9-10)

Effective ELA teachers carefully craft or adapt standards-based units that are aligned with their program's scope and sequence for ELA. Units (i.e., linked CCRSAE-based lessons that support an overarching project or theme) are constructed around meaningful, adult-oriented topics and academic content. Specific reading, writing, speaking/listening, and language standards are turned into unit outcomes to guide instruction and assessment. Achievement of these outcomes is then measured through performance on complex tasks, such as written products, oral presentations, or similar projects that foster the integration of ELA skills and the transfer of learning to the out-of-ABE contexts for which most students are preparing (e.g., family-sustaining work, families, civic life, postsecondary education and/or training).

In planning for instruction, unit developers carefully select meaningful complex texts at the appropriate level, texts that will challenge learners and facilitate learning of both ELA skills and knowledge of the world. They use an approach to unit design that is based on research that suggests that instruction “is most likely to lead to durable, transferable learning if it incorporates real-world activities, tasks, and tools” (NRC, 2012b, p. 4) and from best practice in standards-based education (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). Lessons taught across the unit present information in a clear and organized manner, chunking information appropriately and providing review and reinforcement across time (NRC, 2012c).

In order to create well-structured units and lessons, ACLS and SABES have developed optional [templates](#) to help guide programs so that the ELA skills and adult learning theory are considered.

Individual lessons within the unit target specific standards-based objectives, and teachers include

Figure 5: Guidelines for Fostering Student Engagement

- **Choose the appropriate level of difficulty** (e.g., selecting goals, texts, and tasks that are not too easy nor too difficult)
- **Combine instruction in complex learning strategies with learning of content** (e.g., asking *who, what, where, when, why, how* questions when reading to understand the information)
- **Encourage learners to generate content** (e.g., synthesizing information from several sources in a written form instead of answering multiple-choice questions)
- **Encourage learners to generate explanations or resolve contradictions** (e.g., constructing arguments in support of a claim)
- **Encourage learners to construct ideas from multiple points of view and different perspectives** (e.g., exploring a short story from the perspective of different characters; exploring a controversial topic from the perspective of different stakeholders)
- **Cultivate adaptive, interactive learning environments** (e.g., offering finely-tuned feedback, providing prompts, practicing skills for a real-life purpose)
- **Use and inspire learners’ interests** (e.g., by connecting unit topics to students’ longstanding personal interests or by creating interest in an immediate situation by making it relevant to students’ lives or sense of curiosity)
- **Encourage collaboration and cooperation** (e.g., by engaging learners in peer reviews of student compositions; by having students work together to solve a real-world scenario).
- **Provide (the right degree of) choice and autonomy** (e.g., which text to read, whether to read individually or in a group, what kind of text to write). (NRC, 2012c)

scaffolded, explicit instruction, with explanations, models, guided practice, and independent practice/application. Effective ELA teachers think intentionally about grounding concepts in concrete experiences and making abstract ideas as transparent as possible. In addition, they carefully sequence and pace activities and lessons in logical ways. Effective teachers also vary instruction, structuring small-group and large-group activities to expand learner experiences with types of people, texts, and tasks. (NRC, 2012c).

Effective ELA practitioners pay special attention to the level of student engagement, designing learning tasks that promote intrinsic motivation. Students who are engaged with their learning are more likely to learn in ways that are long-lasting and transferable. In their review of the literature on adult literacy, the NRC (2012c) identified several guidelines teachers can follow to enhance engagement (Figure 5).

Attending to student engagement is complicated somewhat by the reality that adult learners arrive in the ABE classroom with a mix of backgrounds. For instance, at least half of the students in the pre-ASE and ASE classrooms are English Language learners (ELLs), individuals who speak a language other than English. These learners are sometimes placed in ABE classrooms because they are fluent English speakers and adequate readers; however, their special needs as ELLs may be overlooked. They may have vocabulary needs in the areas of signal words and Tier 2 words and need to develop an understanding of the more complex grammar structures that show up in written language as opposed to oral discourse. Lack of familiarity with idioms and cultural background knowledge may also impact comprehension. Effective ELA teachers are familiar with the instructional nuances presented by this group of ELA learners and structure the classroom to address their needs.

Other ABE learners, though native English speakers, may vary in their racial and ethnic backgrounds, their life experiences, their ages, their genders, their experiences with print materials, their familiarity with negotiating online texts, their interests, and their comfort with reading and writing in English. They may also differ in their preferences for individual and group work; for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities; and for detailed versus big-picture thinking.

Lastly, many adult learners have learning disabilities that need to be considered in the classroom. Over 25% of adults in adult education programs reported having a learning disability in one survey (Tamassia et al., 2007). Disabilities specific to reading and writing can especially hinder ELA learning. Effective ELA teachers seek out training related to learning disabilities and incorporate evidence-based techniques, supportive technologies, and accommodations into their classroom instruction (NRC, 2012b; National Institute for Literacy, 2010).

Because of this range of diversity—and the diverse nature of the population of the United States and the Commonwealth—ACLS advocates that all adult education classrooms seek to cultivate an appreciation of difference. This appreciation can come in part from explicit conversation about the unique contributions of people of various backgrounds; however, it is also nurtured by collaborative activity that thoughtfully brings students into communicative practice with each other (NRC, 2012c). Specific to language instruction, native English speakers should be encouraged to recognize their own dialects and customs alongside the non-native English speakers in the classroom. It is especially relevant to discuss with native English speakers the value of different dialects/registers, what is appropriate when, and the importance of Standard English as a gateway marker into mainstream college and career venues (Schierloh, 1991).

In essence, effective ELA teachers understand that, for a wealth of reasons, a group of adult learners—even in a leveled classroom—will often have very different needs. They apply principles of universal design as well as differentiation to reach all the students in their classes. They are especially attuned to individual reading profiles. Principles of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) require that all students be diagnostically assessed to determine their instructional levels for lessons in alphabets, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills/strategies. Effective teachers use this diagnostic information to target level-appropriate texts and instruction in each component relevant for their students.

Indicator P1.1. Standards-based Units

Designs and/or uses instructional units that align to the CCRSAE or the Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education and the program’s scope and sequence. Academically rigorous units define clear evidence of outcomes and include differentiated learning experiences that enable all students to learn the knowledge and skills defined in state standards.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Programs develop instructional units targeting specific ELA standards and order the units into a logical scope and sequence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the anchor and level-specific ELA standards in the CCRSAE to develop, regularly review, and revise (as necessary) the program’s ELA curriculum for each student level (A through D-E) taught in the program. • Contribute feedback and supplementary materials for the program’s ELA curricular materials. 	
b. Unit-level learning outcomes align to the CCRSAE level-specific standards’ focus and guide instruction and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write measurable unit-level learning outcomes that align with the CCRSAE level-specific standards and target higher-order thinking and knowledge building. • Ensure each unit includes a mixture of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language standards. • Include formative and summative assessments of the targeted ELA standards. (See Standard P3: Assessment.) 	
c. Authentic and appropriately complex texts are selected for the unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use adult learning resources (<i>e.g., Newsela, ReadWorks, Marshall Adult Education site</i>) and text analysis tools to find texts for the targeted student levels (see Text Levels, Sets, and Complexity). • Identify key print and/or digital text(s) for the unit that display exceptional craft and thought and/or provide useful information; be explicit about what makes them exceptional as models. • Include print and/or digital texts in the unit that are at or above the expected level of complexity for the targeted student level(s) <u>or</u> text sets that contain texts at a variety of complexity levels that work together to build knowledge. 	
d. A meaningful, culminating task/project for a unit provides purpose for the skills instruction and opportunity to focus on evidence and knowledge-building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame academic topics (<i>e.g., branches of government, cycles</i>) in terms of how they are relevant in real life and consider how ELA skills can be taught within an exploration of these topics. • Offer opportunities for learners to produce written or spoken products similar to what might be expected in contexts outside the classroom (<i>e.g., blogs, reports, presentations, formal letters, brochures, posters, infographs, announcements</i>) or in postsecondary education and training programs (<i>e.g., analysis essays, research papers</i>). 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage students in pursuing rich questions and topics that help them build knowledge or construct arguments and that require close reading for text-based evidence. Teach and assess ELA/literacy standards in the context of the unit project students are completing. 	

Indicator P1.2. Well-structured Lessons
 Develops well-structured lessons as part of instructional units that include clear learning objectives, meaningful formative assessments, appropriate pace and sequence, relevant resources, and the use of technology. Lessons are designed to optimize learner interaction.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Lesson design requires a focus on specific learning objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write relevant, challenging, and measurable lesson-level learning objectives that align with the CCRSAE level-specific standards and unit-level learning outcomes. Include a mixture of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language standards in each lesson. Fold standards into a lesson in a way that builds on their logical connections to each other. Utilize formative assessment to monitor student learning of lesson objectives. (See Standard P2: Assessment.) 	
b. Thoughtfully chunking and organizing activities and lessons help learners construct long-lasting understandings and build transferable skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence and pace activities and lessons carefully, attending to the steps of explicit instruction: explanation, modeling, guided practice, and independent application. Link lesson content to previous lessons or students' knowledge in a content area. Provide multiple examples and models; ground concepts/skills in concrete experiences. Space reinforcement of new material across time (<i>e.g., reinforce one set of vocabulary words over several days; revisit learned skills/strategies</i>). 	
c. Accessing, evaluating, and selecting appropriate texts for instruction is complex but essential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use quantitative and qualitative analysis tools to evaluate text complexity levels and select appropriately challenging print and/or digital texts for each lesson. Incorporate activities that include practicing/applying new skills/strategies within authentic texts, read or listened to for authentic purposes. 	
d. The inclusion of appropriate technology can enhance language and literacy learning and support students in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use online tools and resources for authentic learning activities (<i>e.g., finding information, publishing work, communicating with the teacher</i>) to expose students to tools they may encounter in out-of-school environments. Explicitly teach online navigation strategies (<i>e.g., scrolling; using tabs and side menus; using embedded links; using</i> 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
developing an array of skills and competencies.	<i>the back arrow; identifying and ignoring ads; distinguishing between .com, .org, and .edu sites).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways for students to use social media for instructional purposes (e.g., students write a short summary of a text on Twitter; use Facebook to discuss readings). 	

Indicator P1.3. Student Engagement

Uses a variety of student-centered instructional methods. Provides opportunities for all students to communicate in meaningful ways, interact within authentic contexts, and develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
<p>a. ABE students are most likely to be engaged with their learning when it is appropriately challenging and relevant to their immediate and future lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students develop and apply their ELA skills as they explore topics/questions relevant to careers, family, community, and lifelong learning. Ensure ELA texts and tasks/projects are not too easy and not too difficult for students' level; scaffold as needed. Use wait time and prompting to foster thoughtful student responses to questions. Use time in ELA lessons effectively (e.g., <i>transitioning between activities quickly and engaging students in meaningful language work if they complete tasks early</i>). Balance teacher talk and student talk by including activities that require students' active participation (e.g., <i>explorations and inquiry, class discussions, problem solving, group projects, debates, book clubs, book/poetry shares</i>). Have students generate products (e.g., <i>writings, presentations</i>). 	
<p>b. Students require a variety of interactions with texts and with each other to deepen learning and create a community of learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend the majority of class time having students read, write, or speak directly about a text or multiple texts. Sequence questions/activities to support students' delving deeper into text(s) to build their understanding of the big ideas and key information from the text(s). Require student thinking and responses beyond recall; ask students to elaborate and justify their answers (both orally and in writing), using the text to support ideas and inferences with precision. Ask questions that consistently pertain to the words, phrases, and sentences in the text(s). Build in a variety of approaches to ELA learning (e.g., <i>explicit instruction, visuals, discussion/debate, collaborative peer work, self-directed activities, etc.</i>). 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require that students use evidence to build on each other's observations or insights when discussing or collaborating. 	
c. All adults are empowered by having choice in their activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer choice whenever possible in texts, in technology, and in demonstrating understanding orally or in writing), as long as high expectations and CCRSAE-aligned objectives are still met. Provide frequent opportunities for students to choose from among a range of texts about knowledge-building topics under study for sustained independent reading. 	

Indicator P1.4. Meeting Diverse Needs

Uses an understanding of students' diverse needs to differentiate instruction according to learning preferences and abilities, needs, interests, prior education, cultural beliefs and values, native languages, and life experiences.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Differentiation can occur through adjustments to content, process, and products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the CCRSAE level-specific standards (A through D-E) to align ELA instruction with learners' level(s). Have learners at different reading levels read about the same topic using texts specifically aligned to their levels. Use flexible grouping and provide roles for group members when appropriate. Provide appropriate support (<i>e.g., 1-1 assistance vs. peer support vs. small group</i>). Offer/assign different ways for learners to show their learning (<i>e.g., expecting students to write an essay vs. a paragraph; discussing the main idea of a text in either a pictograph or a poster</i>). 	
b. ABE students' dialects, home cultures, learning differences, and prior experiences are important to their identities; this individual diversity is a strength to be appreciated and explored in the classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with students their values and beliefs about teaching, learning, and language (<i>e.g., the role of the teacher; the role of workbooks vs. authentic materials</i>); share your own. Plan initial class activities (<i>e.g., interviews, surveys, discussions, ice breakers</i>) to learn about students and gather information to inform ELA instruction. Establish a climate of respect in the classroom that acknowledges and affirms individual differences. Encourage the sharing of different points of view, supporting students in questioning their own assumptions and developing their arguments with credible evidence. Select reading and viewing materials that reflect a variety of cultures. 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
c. Students with learning disabilities (LD) and English language learners (ELL) have specific needs that should be intentionally addressed in the ABE classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow program procedures for LD screening and referral; access special services for LD students (if available). • Use Universal Design of Learning (UDL) techniques. • Use evidence-based techniques for LD instruction, including the incorporation of assistive technology (e.g., scanning reading pens; speech-to-text apps). • Especially attend to signal words, idioms, Tier 2 words, written syntax, and cultural understandings when instructing ELL learners. • Develop an understanding of one’s own cross-cultural awareness and cultural competence as a teacher. 	
d. Depending on how proficient students are at identifying words, they may need level-appropriate, evidence-based instruction in alphabets (e.g., word parts, word analysis, and/or sight words) to improve their reading comprehension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen awareness of word parts, use rhyming, oral blending of spoken parts to form recognizable words, or oral segmentation tasks (e.g., breaking a word into its parts by tapping out or counting the parts). • Use a variety of materials, systematic and explicit methods, and multisensory instruction to develop and strengthen students’ ability to identify words and word parts. • Expose students to common, level-appropriate prefixes, suffixes, and root words. • Provide students with opportunities to read aloud from texts where they can apply what they are learning about words and word parts to identify unfamiliar words. 	
e. Students need evidence-based fluency instruction, appropriate for their levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For beginning adult readers, use Guided, Repeated Oral Reading techniques, including echo reading and choral reading. • For intermediate readers, use Repeated Readings, Marked Phrase Boundaries, and Collaborative Oral Reading. • For secondary-level readers, use additional techniques such as sentence-combining and sentence chunking to build skills in tackling long, complex sentence structures. • Read sections of texts aloud with students to help them learn recurring words and the syntax of written English. • Provide materials that encourage students to increase the amount of time they spend reading outside of class. 	
f. Level-appropriate academic vocabulary (Tier 2) and domain-specific words (Tier 3) need to be explicitly and habitually included in instruction, using evidence-based practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use direct instruction to teach students the meanings of level-appropriate academic and domain-specific words; provide students with multiple opportunities to use those words in speaking and writing, providing feedback (e.g., <i>Quadrant Charts, Yes/No/Why</i>). • Emphasize the importance of vocabulary outside of class by discussing students’ encounters with words at work, on television, in the newspaper, etc. 	

Another more comprehensive way to consider assessments is to categorize them by their principal program purpose:

- 1) to report student progress for program and system decision-making;
- 2) to inform instructional decision-making, and
- 3) to motivate students.

First, standardized assessments such as MAPT or TABE are often used to assess and then report student progress. In order for the results from these assessments to be valid and reliable, certain procedures must be carefully followed, so ABE teachers should be trained in these policies. Programs submit results from these assessments to the state, where they are compiled for federal reporting. With WIOA legislation and its greater emphasis on student outcomes (i.e., completion of NRS Educational Functioning Levels, achievement of a high school equivalency, and entrance into postsecondary education or training), funding at all levels can be affected by this performance data. Effective teachers work together in their programs to study the data and determine how to improve classroom and program services, and ultimately, student outcomes. Therefore, it is important for students to understand the important role that standardized testing plays for students and for programs under WIOA. Students will benefit by understanding this role and being urged to take pre- and post-testing seriously.

A second purpose of assessment is to inform instructional decision-making. The MAPT and TABE can fall within this category when the results are used for placing students into the right class level (TABE only; MAPT may not be used for placement), identifying the appropriate level of reading material for reading comprehension, and/or making decisions about moving students into a higher class. Diagnostic assessment also falls in this category. Diagnostic assessment usually involves administering short assessments to students to discern the underlying reasons for their performance in a particular skill. For instance, adult intermediate readers with the same silent reading comprehension score can have varying patterns of strengths and weaknesses (or “profiles”) in word identification, oral vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Strucker, 1997). In order to best serve these students, teachers gather more specific information by conducting either formal (i.e., standardized) or [informal testing](#) in the essential components of reading (alphabeticity, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension). Teachers can also use artifacts from authentic reading, writing, and oral communication experiences as informal assessments (e.g., oral fluency rubrics used during read-alouds, writing samples, rubrics during presentations). These formative assessments help teachers check what students have learned and in what situations they can apply their knowledge and skills. With this information, teachers are able to make decisions about re-teaching and/or extending learning.

The third type of assessment purpose is to motivate students. Helping students see their growth and learn strategies for monitoring progress towards goal attainment empowers students for immediate and long-term learning. Thus, effective teachers engage students in understanding the different types of assessments, the purposes and strategies for each, and how to use the results to guide their future educational decisions.

Indicator P2.1. Assessment Methods

Uses a variety of methods to equitably assess a broad range of skills, accommodate diverse needs, and motivate students. Designs and administers a variety of formative and summative assessments to inform instruction, identify learning needs, and monitor students’ progress toward achieving both personal goals and state standards. Understands and shares with students the importance of performing well on NRS-approved assessments.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Federal, ACLS, and program policies related to placement, re-assessment, and accountability impact student assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, discuss with colleagues, and follow relevant assessment policies. • Stay up to date with ABE assessment trainings. • Understand which student outcomes impact measures of program achievement, and work with students to develop a culture about achievement. • Explain the kinds of appropriate and legal accommodations in assessments or testing conditions for which students may be eligible (e.g., for the HiSET or GED) and how they should request these. 	
b. Standardized assessments provide valid and reliable information only when administered and interpreted according to the publishers’ and ACLS’s directions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and follow with fidelity publisher and ACLS guidelines for the administration, scoring, and interpretation of standardized assessments used in the program. • Use standardized test scores as one tool to track students’ Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gains over a substantial period of time. • Analyze standardized assessment information in conjunction with other assessment data (e.g., <i>portfolios, formative assessments</i>) to inform instruction. 	
c. The results of diagnostic assessments provide important information about individual skills appropriate for instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use diagnostic assessments of students’ component reading skills (e.g., <i>alphabetic, fluency, vocabulary</i>) to focus instruction. • Use writing and oral assessment data to identify individual strengths and areas of needed growth in relevant ELA standards. 	
d. Structured classroom assessments should measure student learning at the end of an instructional unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ “backward design” to determine what the final learning product will be for a unit and how targeted ELA level-specific standards will be assessed. • Design rubrics, checklists, or other specific guidelines that make clear to students how performance will be evaluated. • Use quizzes/tests sparingly and for the purpose of preparing students for more formal education settings/ credentialing assessments and/or to assess discrete knowledge or skills. 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
<p>e. Formative assessment takes many forms and provides teachers and students with important information about teaching and learning within a unit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for student understanding, using informal yet deliberative methods (<i>e.g., walk around the room to check on students' work, individually solicit and monitor verbal responses from a wide range of students, use Exit Tickets</i>). • Engage students in evaluating and reflecting on their own learning. • Assess students' developing word identification, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills within units by such methods as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ recording accuracy when reading aloud from connected text; ○ using a rubric that evaluates accuracy, rate, and prosody when students read aloud text related to the unit; ○ asking students to use target vocabulary appropriately in unit products (<i>e.g., presentations, written pieces</i>); ○ using a checklist or journal reflection to evaluate students' application of new comprehension skills in relation to assignments related to the unit. • Provide students with prompt, specific feedback to correct misunderstandings and reinforce learning. 	

Indicator P2.2. Modifying Instruction

Analyzes results from a variety of assessments and other data (*e.g., attendance, engagement*) to measure student learning, inform instruction, and determine differentiated interventions. Evaluates the effectiveness of instruction and modifies it based on formative assessment results and feedback from students and colleagues.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
<p>a. A comprehensive assessment system includes organizing student data for individuals and classes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize and maintain assessment data for each student (<i>e.g., using an electronic or traditional portfolio/folder system and/or spreadsheet</i>). • Organize assessment data for each class to manage flexible groupings for targeted skill areas. 	
<p>b. Formal and informal assessment data need to be reviewed regularly to inform class instruction, student groupings and related instruction, and interventions for specific students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze formative and other kinds of assessment data regularly to adjust student groupings. • Use appropriate methods for analyzing assessment information to identify individual student's area(s) for re-teaching. • Offer strategic supports and scaffolds to students based on analysis of data (<i>e.g., individualized or peer tutoring, re-teaching, review of basic skills</i>). 	

Indicator P2.3. Student Progress

Shares assessment results with students to acknowledge progress, identify gaps, and determine next steps. Seeks and implements feedback from students and colleagues to improve learning. Understands and shares with learners the role and importance of formative, summative, and NRS assessments as tools that allow students to demonstrate their learning. Encourages students to do their best on all assessments and helps students use results.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Students need to know about different types of assessment and how to use strategies specific to the different types.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with students the different kinds, purposes, and formats of assessment, including HiSET and GED and entry/placement into postsecondary education or training (as appropriate). • Explicitly teach test-taking strategies for various ELA assessment types and provide ample opportunities for students to prepare for varied formats, including self-evaluations, quizzes, tests, and portfolios. 	
b. Students are more likely to take responsibility for their learning when they can track their progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share assessment results with students in sensitive ways (<i>e.g., using CCRSAE levels and not grade levels</i>). • Help students cultivate a positive stance towards assessment results and feedback. 	
c. Working with others (students and teachers) provides support for enhancing individual, program, and field approaches to ABE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve students in designing and using assessment approaches (<i>e.g., help develop or give feedback on rubrics/checklists; assess own work and that of their peers</i>). • Solicit student feedback on instruction and make needed adjustments (<i>e.g., student reflections at ends of units; class surveys</i>). • Share assessment tools and strategies with colleagues. • Discuss assessment data with program colleagues to identify assessment trends, both program-wide and across class levels; adjust instruction. 	

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT DOMAIN (C)

Teachers value continuous learning, both for their students and for themselves. They cultivate a learning environment that nurtures a growth mindset for their students and support them as they claim ownership of their learning. Teachers guide students to persevere and put forth effort as they engage in productive struggle, challenge misconceptions about their abilities, identify their own strengths and learning needs, set goals for themselves, and monitor their own progress as they become independent, lifelong learners.

Teachers are reflective practitioners. They identify their own learning needs to best support their students, set student learning and professional practice goals, and participate in a variety of high quality professional development activities to refine and expand their practices (e.g. coaching, workshops, courses, research, professional learning communities). They seek and integrate constructive feedback from students and colleagues. They demonstrate respect and professionalism in all interactions with their students and colleagues.

STANDARD C1: Growth Mindset

Cultivates a welcoming and judgment-free learning environment that motivates students and challenges them to believe that their abilities can be developed through persistence and hard work, both now and in the future. Promotes learning outside the classroom and over the lifespan.

Supporting Explanation for Standard C1

Carol Dweck, a researcher in motivation and learning at Stanford, introduced the idea of “growth mindset” in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2006). A growth mindset is an understanding about one’s abilities that recognizes the role that dedication and hard work play in success. Whereas an individual with a fixed mindset tends to believe his or her abilities come from innate ability (or “fixed” traits), an individual with a growth mindset values perseverance and effort. A growth mindset supports learning in the moment but also provides an orientation towards learning that fosters growth over the lifespan.

A principal component of learning environments that foster a growth mindset is an instructor that holds high expectations for all students. The effective teacher works to develop a culture of effort, one in which students understand that success is not in-born but earned. In their summary of research on adult literacy instruction, the National Research Council (2012c) discussed how self-efficacy (or students’ beliefs about their ability in a particular area) affects student learning. Students who believe they “can’t read” or “can’t write” because they aren’t smart enough often will not put forth the effort required to make the progress needed. One way to counter these beliefs and foster self-efficacy in literacy learning is to help students frame their successes and failures in terms of effort instead of fixed intelligence. A significant task of the teacher is to “[provide] feedback that stresses the processes of learning, such as the importance of using

strategies, monitoring one’s understanding, and engaging in sustained effort, even in the face of challenge” (NRC, 2012, p. 141).

Practitioners must also support their adult learners in looking to the future, inviting them to not only take responsibility for their learning in the present but also once they leave the ABE program. The learning environment can set the stage for how students approach lifelong learning. Researchers have noted that classroom practices that parallel the types of literacy activities performed in real-life are more likely to lead to literate activity outside the classroom, which over the course of time, builds reading and writing proficiency (as measured on standardized tests) (e.g., Reder, 2013 ; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2000). Thus, part of promoting life-long learning is teaching in ways that allow students to “take up” literacy practices outside the classroom, which will provide the hours of practice required to develop expertise (NRC, 2012c; Sabatini, 2015). Students also need to know and use learning strategies that will help them access resources, practice new skills efficiently, and use current digital technologies to foster ongoing learning.

Indicator C1.1. High Expectations
 Establishes high expectations for the quality of student work and the effort required to produce it. Within a safe classroom environment, encourages risk taking and productive struggle. Models and reinforces ways that students can master challenging material through persistence, focused effort, and critical thinking.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Many students believe innate ability explains academic success more than effort and perseverance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore stories, poems, essays, articles, interviews, and speeches around the theme of persistence. • Recognize success in ELA learning in terms of specific efforts, persistence, and development of skills (e.g., “<i>You worked hard on linking the paragraphs with effective transitions, so it’s a much stronger piece</i>” instead of vague comments like “good job” or giving credit to innate ability—“you’re so smart”). • Cultivate an appreciation for mistakes as a valuable part of the learning process. • Teach students the cognitive and metacognitive strategies they need to take control of their language/literacy use and learning; make conversation about these strategies a major component of the class. 	
b. Students rise to high expectations that are clearly communicated and built into class routines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share unit outcomes and lesson objectives with students so they know what they are supposed to learn. • Define high expectations for the quality of student work through rubrics and checklists; teach students how to use them. • Have students incorporate peer and instructor feedback when revising writings, presentations, and other projects. 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End lessons by reviewing with students what was learned (<i>e.g., revisit lesson goals, summarize student learning with references to student work and discussion</i>) and previewing how the next lesson will build on that learning. 	

Indicator C1.2. Student Ownership
 Provides learning experiences that enable students to claim ownership of their learning by identifying their own strengths, interests, and needs; setting meaningful and challenging learning goals for themselves; asking for support when needed; and monitoring their own progress.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Adult learners benefit from active involvement in determining and managing their ELA goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for students to identify, reflect upon, and/or share their personal, career, reading, and writing interests/goals through inventories, surveys, and discussion. Engage students in shaping their personal ELA goals, setting both long-term and measurable, attainable short-term goals. Support students in making, following, and revisiting action plans to achieve their goals. 	
b. Adult learners often need to learn strategies for overcoming the barriers they may face in pursuing their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students in identifying strategies to address challenges (<i>e.g., asking for help, writing down and revisiting goals, keeping learning logs</i>). Discuss the importance of risk-taking and productive struggle, sharing examples from own lives, modern and historical role models, and literature. 	

Indicator C1.3. Lifelong Learning
 Incorporates strategies that assist students in becoming self-reliant, independent learners who are motivated and adequately prepared for postsecondary education and careers.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Responsive AE instruction prepares adult learners for transitions to higher-skilled employment and/or advanced academic pursuits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As students make ELA learning goals, help them think about the role of postsecondary education and/or training in gaining family-sustaining employment, and what ELA skills they will need. Before and/or after learning new ELA skills, invite students to consider how these skills are needed outside the classroom. Integrate the technology and written communication skills needed to function in online environments (<i>e.g., effectively/appropriately choose digital tools to convey information, use email etiquette, use online job applications, write work-related emails, and conduct Internet searches and research</i>). 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
b. Adult learners need to use oral and print skills outside the classroom in order to continue to develop their proficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate authentic literacy practices (<i>e.g., reading prescription labels, accessing and reading news, speaking about community issues</i>) in the classroom so that students can continue these practices when they leave the program. • Encourage students to utilize reading logs and/or book logs to track reading as a way to nurture reading habits. • Invite students to share outside readings in class to foster an appreciation for reading as a way to meet goals or find enjoyment. 	
c. Knowledge of independent study resources can maximize the ELA learning of motivated students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify mentors and colleagues with whom students can share ideas, ask questions, and receive feedback. • Become aware of and suggest websites or apps for students' practice and reinforcement outside the classroom. 	

STANDARD C2: Reflective Practice
Engages in a continuous improvement process that includes self-assessment, goal setting, high quality professional development, and ongoing reflection to gain greater expertise, develop new teaching approaches, and refine current instructional practices.

Supporting Explanation for Standard C2

Adult education teachers of ELA come into their roles from a variety of pathways. Some enter with a strong K-12 background but lack formal credentialing in teaching adults. Others may have experience and training in working with adults but lack the content knowledge related to English language arts instruction, specifically. Still other teachers may have taught literacy at one level (for instance, beginning readers) but not at the full range required for the classes they are currently expected to instruct. For these reasons, all ELA teachers benefit from regular opportunities to develop their expertise in ELA instruction and adult learning. Furthermore, research in adult literacy and language learning continues to inform the field, and policies related to assessment and instruction shift over time, making regular professional development even more crucial.

ACLS defines professional development for teachers as a learning activity that is designed to strengthen the skills and/or knowledge needed by individual practitioners to impact student learning positively. Research in professional development emphasizes that sustained engagement in extended learning opportunities is more likely to impact practice than short workshops divorced from the teacher's own instructional context. Especially relevant professional learning activities that address individual, program, and state priorities are offered by the state's System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES). Effective English language arts and literacy teachers regularly engage with the [SABES ELA Curriculum & Instruction PD Center](#), taking advantage of the Center's face-to-face, blended, and online offerings. Effective teachers may also participate in the online, self-paced LINCS courses offered for free to practitioners nationwide or

by organizations such as COABE, ProLiteracy, and ASCD. In addition, they may read professional journals, visit other programs to learn new approaches, or participate in webinars, study circles, teacher research projects, and/or online learning communities.

ACLS maintains that a key factor in professional learning is reflective practice, in which professionals reflect on their student outcomes and target the professional knowledge, skills, and theories of the field that will most enhance those outcomes (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). This kind of reflection requires critical thinking: testing assumptions, realizing the effect of context on thoughts and actions, intentionally considering the research, and recognizing when a procedure or process is in place only because “it’s always been done that way” (Brookfield, 1986). Two aspects of ACLS’s approach to reflective practice are key: using student and program data to assist in reflecting on practice and collaborating with both students and colleagues in setting goals, analyzing data, and determining next steps. Ultimately, the shared goal for students is for them to achieve their High School Equivalency, if needed, and enter postsecondary education (directly into credit-bearing courses) or training. If these outcomes will take more time, then focusing on students’ completion of Educational Functioning Levels is important.

As referenced in the Introduction to this document, ACLS has implemented a Six-Step Cycle of Continuous Learning as part of the Educator Growth and Evaluation (EGE) Model. Within this cycle, effective ELA teachers work with their supervisors and other colleagues to plan for ongoing professional learning (Step 1), self-assess their proficiency in the knowledge and skills described in the ELA Proficiency Guide (Step 2), craft learning goals based on their self-assessment (Step 3), engage in PD activities (Step 4), monitor their progress and adjust as needed (Step 5), and reflect on the impact they see on student learning and program outcomes (Step 6). See the Introduction in this document and ACLS resources for more information about the EGE Cycle.

Indicator C2.1. Self-Assessment
Engages in a self-assessment process using state professional standards, student data, and feedback from students and colleagues to reflect on the effectiveness of instruction, with the intention of improving practice and student learning. Considers how personal beliefs and cultural values influence instructional decisions.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Regular reflection on one’s own teaching, using a variety of lenses, can help to identify potential areas of focus for professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the ELA Proficiency Guide (this document) to identify areas of proficiency and areas to target for further development. • Review student assessment data and student work to target areas of practice to improve through professional development. • Question own assumptions, experiences, and cultural values and the role they play in decision-making. • Review notes written during lessons/units to reflect on what went well and areas that need improvement. 	

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
b. Students and colleagues can offer valuable input for improving practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and incorporate feedback from students on such things as instruction they didn't understand, their perceptions of instructional effectiveness, and their suggestions for enhancing learning. • Enlist colleagues and/or supervisor to observe teaching and learning and offer feedback. • Invite colleagues to offer feedback on lesson plans/units as "critical friends." • Offer to provide feedback/input on the work of colleagues. 	

Indicator C2.2. Goal Setting
 Uses insights from self-assessments to identify meaningful student learning and professional practice goals that are clear, results-focused, and measurable or observable. Reviews goals, monitors progress, and makes revisions as needed.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
a. Professional learning is often the most powerful when it is intentional and framed around concrete goals that target changes in practice and improved outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize and articulate goals that will improve student learning. • Seek input from supervisor and colleagues to make sure own PD goals align with the program's continuous improvement plan. • Craft clear goals that are specific about the targeted results and how to tell when the goal is achieved. 	
b. Goals are more likely to be achieved if they are accompanied by action plans and are reviewed regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a PD plan around articulated goals, identifying PD activities, resources, and checking-in points. • Include strategies for determining if the goal attainment has an impact on student learning and program outcomes (<i>e.g., reviewing student assessment and program outcome data</i>). • Implement strategies to track and document changes in practice; revise plan as needed. • Seek input and assistance from supervisor and colleagues at various points. 	

Indicator C2.3. Professional Development

Engages in a variety of high quality professional development activities. Seeks out and applies new ideas from professional development, supervisors, colleagues, and other resources to gain expertise and advance student learning.

What Effective ELA Teachers Know	What Effective ELA Teachers Do	✓ Focus
<p>a. Professional development is key to keeping up-to-date with ELA and adult education research and in sustaining quality professional practice at the individual and program level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage every year in sustained and collaborative professional development (<i>e.g., extended trainings, coaching, study circles, online discussion groups</i>). • Attend SABES trainings in evidence-based ELA instruction for appropriate instructional levels. • Participate in state and national webinars and online courses offered through SABES and LINCS. • Attend ELA workshops at state, regional, and national conferences. • Participate in state and national online discussion groups (<i>e.g., MA ELA Learning Community, LINCS Reading and Writing Discussion Group</i>). • Regularly read professional materials and publications. • Join COABE or another professional organization focused on ELA instruction. • Based on PD, identify new techniques and approaches, integrate them into practice, and monitor impact. 	
<p>b. Colleagues look to each other for professional wisdom and expertise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with supervisor to target and debrief professional development activities. • Work with other practitioners in teams to learn new ideas and implement them at the program/classroom level. • Share individual PD plan with appropriate PD Centers. • Reflect on progress and share successes with colleagues at the program, state, and national levels. 	

Research/Resources for the Continuous Improvement Domain

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