NBPTS

Early Adolescence English Language Arts STANDARDS

Second Edition

National Board for PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS™

for teachers of students ages 11–15

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The world-class schools the United States requires cannot exist without a world-class teaching force; the two go hand in hand. Many accomplished teachers already work in the nation's schools, but their knowledge and skills are often unacknowledged and underutilized. Delineating outstanding practice and recognizing those who achieve it are important first steps in shaping the kind of teaching profession the nation needs. This is the core challenge embraced by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards™ (NBPTS). Founded in 1987 with a broad base of support from governors, teacher union and school board leaders, school administrators, college and university officials, business executives, foundations, and concerned citizens, NBPTS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a 63-member board of directors, the majority of whom are teachers. Committed to basic reform in education, NBPTS recognizes that teaching is at the heart of education and, further, that the single most important action the nation can take to improve schools is to strengthen teaching. To this end, NBPTS has embraced a three-part mission:

- to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do;
- to develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards; and
- to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning.

Dedication to this mission is elevating the teaching profession, educating the public about the demands and complexity of accomplished teaching practice, and making teaching a more attractive profession for talented college graduates with many other promising career options.

National Board Certification® is more than a system for recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers. It offers both an opportunity to guide the continuing growth and development of the teaching profession and a chance to design ways to organize and manage schools so as to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers®. Together with other reforms, National Board Certification is a catalyst for significant change in the teaching profession and in education.

The Philosophical Context

The standards presented here lay the foundation for the Early Adolescence/English Language Arts certificate. They represent a professional consensus on the aspects of practice that distinguish accomplished teachers. Cast in terms of actions that teachers take to advance student achievement, these standards also incorporate the essential knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments that allow teachers to practice at a high level. Like all NBPTS Standards, this standards document is grounded philosophically in the NBPTS policy statement *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. That statement identifies five core propositions.

1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice, as appropriate, on the basis of observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances, and peer relationships.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students' cognitive capacity and respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, sense of civic responsibility, and respect for individual, cultural, religious, and racial differences.

2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subjects is created, organized, linked to other disciplines, and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional resources that can be of assistance. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to learning the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve challenging problems.

3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain, and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students. They make the most effective use of time in their instruction. They are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching and at making use of their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own.

Accomplished teachers command a range of instructional techniques and know when to employ them. They are devoted to high-quality practice and know how to offer each student the opportunity to succeed.

Accomplished teachers know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment and how to organize instruction so as to meet the schools' goals for students. They are adept at setting norms of social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary setbacks.

Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as the progress of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for assessing student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to students, parents, and administrators.

4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students—curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity, and appreciation of cultural differences. They demonstrate capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth—the ability to reason, take multiple perspectives, be creative and take risks, and experiment and solve problems.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter, and instruction, and their understanding of their students, to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are grounded not only in the literature of their fields but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning, which they seek to encourage in their students.

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers examine their practice critically, expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment, and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas, and theories.

5) Teachers are members of learning communities.

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development, and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

The Certification Framework

Using the Five Core Propositions as a springboard, NBPTS sets standards and offers National Board Certification in nearly 30 fields. These fields are defined by the developmental level of the students and the subject or subjects being taught. The first descriptor represents the four overlapping student developmental levels:

- Early Childhood, ages 3–8;
- Middle Childhood, ages 7–12;
- Early Adolescence, ages 11–15;
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood, ages 14–18+.

The second descriptor indicates the substantive focus of a teacher's practice. Teachers may select either a subject-specific or a generalist certificate at a particular developmental level. Subject-specific certificates are designed for teachers who emphasize a single subject area in

their teaching (e.g., Early Adolescence/English Language Arts, Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics); generalist certificates are designed for teachers who develop student skills and knowledge across the curriculum (e.g., Early Childhood/Generalist, Middle Childhood/Generalist). For some subject-specific certificates, developmental levels are joined together to recognize the commonalities in teaching students at those developmental levels (e.g., Early and Middle Childhood/Art).

Standards and Assessment Development

Following a nationwide search for outstanding educators, a standards committee is appointed for each field. The committees are generally made up of 15 members who are broadly representative of accomplished professionals in their fields. A majority of committee members are teachers regularly engaged in teaching students in the field in question; other members are typically professors, experts in child development, teacher educators, and other professionals in the relevant discipline. The standards committees develop the specific standards for each field, which are then disseminated widely for public critique and comment and subsequently revised as necessary before their adoption by the NBPTS Board of Directors. Periodically, standards are updated so that they remain dynamic documents, responsive to changes in the field.

Determining whether or not candidates meet the standards requires performance-based assessment methods that are fair, valid, and reliable and that ask teachers to demonstrate principled, professional judgments in a variety of situations. A testing contractor specializing in assessment development works with standards committee members, teacher assessment development teams, and members of the NBPTS staff to develop assessment exercises and pilot test them with teachers active in each certificate field. The assessment process involves two primary activities: (1) the compilation of a portfolio of teaching practice over a period of time and (2) the demonstration of content knowledge through assessment center exercises. Teachers prepare their portfolios by videotaping their teaching, gathering student learning products and other teaching artifacts, and providing detailed analyses of their practice. At the assessment center, teachers write answers to questions that relate primarily to content knowledge specific to their fields.

The portfolio is designed to capture teaching in real-time, real-life settings, thus allowing trained assessors from the field in question to examine how teachers translate knowledge and theory into practice. It also yields the most valued evidence NBPTS collects—videos of practice and samples of student work. The videos and student work are accompanied by commentaries on the goals and purposes of instruction, the effectiveness of the practice, teachers' reflections on what occurred, and their rationales for the professional judgments they made. In addition, the portfolio allows candidates to document their accomplishments in contributing to the advancement of the profession and the improvement of schooling—whether at the local, state, or national level—and to document their ability to work constructively with their students' families.

Teachers report that the portfolio is a professional development vehicle of considerable power, in part because it challenges the historic isolation of teachers from their peers. It accomplishes this by actively encouraging candidates to seek the advice and counsel of their professional colleagues—whether across the hall or across the country—as they build their

portfolios. It also requires teachers to examine the underlying assumptions of their practice and the results of their efforts in critical but healthy ways. This emphasis on reflection is highly valued by teachers who go through the process of National Board Certification.

The assessment center exercises are designed to complement the portfolio. They validate that the knowledge and skills exhibited in the portfolio are, in fact, accurate reflections of what candidates know and can do, and they give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills not sampled in the portfolio because of the candidate's specific teaching assignment. For example, high school science teachers assigned to teach only physics in a given year might have difficulty demonstrating in their portfolio a broad knowledge of biology. Given that the NBPTS Standards for science teachers place a high value on such capabilities, another strategy for data collection is necessary. The assessment center exercises fill this gap and otherwise augment the portfolio. Each candidate's work is examined by trained assessors who teach in the certificate field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards believes that a valid assessment of accomplished practice must allow for the variety of forms sound practice takes. It must also sample the range of content knowledge that teachers possess and must provide appropriate contexts for assessments of teaching knowledge and skill. Teaching is not just about knowing things; it is about the use of knowledge—knowledge of learners and of learning, of schools and of subjects—in the service of helping students grow and develop. Consequently, NBPTS believes that the most valid teacher assessment processes engage candidates in the activities of teaching—activities that require the display and use of teaching knowledge and skill and that allow teachers the opportunity to explain and justify their actions.

In its assessment development work, NBPTS uses technology for assessment when appropriate; ensures broad representation of the diversity that exists within the profession; engages pertinent disciplinary and specialty associations at key points in the process; collaborates closely with appropriate state agencies, academic institutions, and independent research and education organizations; establishes procedures to detect and eliminate instances of external and internal bias with respect to age, gender, and racial and ethnic background of teacher-candidates; and selects the method exhibiting the least adverse impact when given a choice among equally valid assessments.

Once an assessment has been thoroughly tested and found to meet NBPTS requirements for validity, reliability, and fairness, eligible teachers may apply for National Board Certification. To be eligible, a teacher must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution; have a minimum of three years' teaching experience at the early childhood, elementary school, middle school, or high school level; and have held a valid state teaching license for those three years or, where a license is not required, have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state.

Strengthening Teaching and Improving Learning

The National Board's system of standards and certification is commanding the respect of the profession and the public, thereby making a difference in how communities and policymakers view teachers, how teachers view themselves, and how teachers improve their practice throughout their careers. National Board Certification has yielded such results in part because it has

forged a national consensus on the characteristics of accomplished teaching practice in each field. The traditional conversation about teacher competence has focused on beginning teachers. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has helped broaden this conversation to span the entire career of teachers.

Developing standards of accomplished practice helps to elevate the teaching profession as the standards make public the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of accomplished teachers. However, making such standards the basis for National Board Certification promises much more. Since National Board Certification identifies accomplished teachers in a fair and trustworthy manner, it can offer career paths for teachers that will make use of their knowledge, wisdom, and expertise; give accomplished practitioners the opportunity to achieve greater status, authority, and compensation; and accelerate efforts to build more successful school organizations and structures.

By holding accomplished teachers to high and rigorous standards, National Board Certification encourages change along several key fronts:

- changing what it means to have a career in teaching by recognizing and rewarding accomplished teachers and by making it possible for teachers to advance in responsibility, status, and compensation without having to leave the classroom;

- changing the culture of teaching by accelerating growth in the knowledge base of teaching, by placing real value on professional judgment and accomplished practice in all its various manifestations, and by encouraging teachers to search for new knowledge and better practice through a steady regimen of collaboration and reflection with peers and others;

- changing the way schools are organized and managed by creating a vehicle that facilitates the establishment of unique teacher positions, providing accomplished teachers with greater authority and autonomy in making instructional decisions and greater responsibility for sharing their expertise to strengthen the practice of others;

- changing the nature of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development by laying a standards-based foundation for a fully articulated career development path that begins with prospective teachers and leads to accomplished teachers;

- changing the way school districts think about hiring and compensating teachers by encouraging administrators and school boards to reward excellence in teaching by seeking to hire accomplished teachers.

Although National Board Certification has been designed with the entire country in mind, each state and locality decides for itself how best to encourage teachers to achieve National Board Certification and how best to take advantage of the expertise of the National Board Certified Teachers in their midst. Across the country, legislation has been enacted that supports National Board Certification, including allocations of funds to pay for the certification fee for teachers, release time for candidates to work on their portfolios and prepare for the assessment

center exercises, and salary supplements for teachers who achieve National Board Certification. Incentives for National Board Certification exist at the state or local level in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia.

As this support at the state and local levels suggests, National Board Certification is recognized throughout the nation as a rich professional development experience. Because National Board Certification provides states and localities with a way to structure teachers' roles and responsibilities more effectively and to allow schools to benefit from the wisdom of their strongest teachers, National Board Certification is a strong component of education reform in the United States.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe the key aspects of practice that define accomplished teaching of English language arts to students 11 to 15 years of age. Two key questions frame the context for this report. The first concerns purpose: What is the role of English language arts within the educational setting? Articulating a consensus about the central goals of instruction in this field is a prerequisite for establishing standards that define accomplished practice. The second question addresses the sociocultural setting in which students develop: What is it like to come of age in the United States in the twenty-first century? Both the changing conditions of children's lives and new demographic realities must be taken into account in any contemporary definition of accomplished teaching practice.

The Educational Context

From the era of the one-room schoolhouse—in which reading and writing accounted for two of the traditional "three Rs"—to the present with its vastly more sophisticated curriculum, the discipline of English language arts has occupied center stage in the education of America's youth. This long-standing pride of place is no accident. Parents and the public expect schools to prepare students for full participation in society in a variety of adult roles. Today's students will become workers who have the knowledge and skills to adapt to and prosper in a constantly changing, increasingly competitive global economy. They will be citizens invigorated by our society's growing ethnic and cultural diversity, loyal to its democratic ideals, and committed to its improvement. They will be individuals—parents, partners, neighbors, and friends—who have thought about the important questions in life and are prepared to make mature, healthy, and responsible choices. Educators know that the English language arts have vital contributions to make in the development of each of these essential adult capacities.

Accomplished teachers provide high-quality instruction despite the various challenges they may face. The difficulty of meeting the diverse needs of learners can be compounded by such factors as the demands of large classes, the need to reach curriculum goals while also preparing students for standardized testing, and the necessity of dealing constructively with a dearth of resources and issues of school violence. As school climates and educational contexts change, teachers look for ways to create safe, welcoming environments where they can meet their goal of helping each student to improve and grow.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are constantly opening up new worlds for their students by stretching and expanding the boundaries of students' language competency. Students read to make sense of what affects their lives, and they are exposed to works of literature that reflect the breadth and diversity of the human experience. They discover and express their thoughts in a range of written forms. They listen to and speak with one another, exercising their new interpretive skills in the exploration of all manner of print and nonprint texts, such as poetry, novels, plays, folklore, informational texts, television programs, oral discourse, music, newspaper stories, advertisements, and technological resources.

In addition to learning about language and texts for their own sake, students learn to use literacy as a tool for engaging in everyday life. They become increasingly confident in their power to use language to serve their individual purposes. Their vocabularies expand. Their knowledge of the conventions of grammar and syntax improves, as does their appreciation for the rich expressiveness of dialectal variation. They hone their analytical, expressive, and persuasive powers as they explore increasingly complex texts. Through the study of literature,

students are invited to live other lives in their imagination and, consequently, to live their own lives more fully. They develop the sense of empathy and shared human values that characterizes all ethical action. In short, they join the community of literate adults.

The Young Adolescent in Context

The changing conditions of youth must be taken into account in any contemporary definition of accomplished teaching practice for young adolescents.

From a demographic perspective, a significant linguistic and cultural shift is under way in the makeup of the student population. Children whose first language is not English make up a growing percentage of students in American classrooms. Continuing migration patterns make it increasingly likely that a large percentage of classroom teachers will work, in the course of their careers, with students who are learning English. This new reality carries with it a responsibility for teachers to adapt their instructional practice to ensure that all students gain full access to the language arts curriculum. Some forms that this adaptation might take are described in the body of this document.

From a societal perspective, today's young adolescents also face a different path to adulthood. Children are raised in many different family arrangements. The number of children being raised in poverty has increased dramatically over the last two decades. Many children live in neighborhoods blighted by drugs and violent crime and must grapple daily with the vicissitudes of hunger, substandard housing, and limited access to health care. In inner cities, rural areas, and suburbs, schools and teachers are being asked to provide more nurturing of children than ever before.

Teachers of young adolescents must also reckon with the special developmental characteristics of the age group. Early adolescence is a period of extremely rapid change—intellectual, physical, social, and emotional—which may temporarily exaggerate differences among classmates.

Young adolescents are in transition, vacillating between a yearning for the privileges of adult independence and a reluctance to leave the safe harbor of childhood. Young adolescents can be studies in contrast as they search for provisional answers to the age-old questions, Who am I? and Where do I fit in the world? They can be supremely confident one moment, full of doubt the next; focused on their learning in the morning, irresponsible by the afternoon; thoughtlessly selfish one instant, guilelessly altruistic the next. Many young adolescents are also extremely self-conscious, highly influenced by peer-group opinion, and vulnerable to emotional hurt.

For all the challenges, accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers recognize some distinct advantages in working with this age group. Early adolescence is typically a period of exploration when students are open to new ideas. Young adolescents can have a well-developed sense of humor and may enjoy many forms of play, including wordplay. They often have an abundance of energy and an infectious enthusiasm that can propel the learning experience to great heights. Because they are experimenting with new social roles and issues of self-identity, young adolescents are ripe to be drawn into discussions of motives, character, and values—the essence of literature, film, and other texts. Because peer social relationships come first with many young adolescents, they often like and benefit from work in collaborative groups and, when guided, will engage in genuine literary conversation, teaching one another about the written word. The unique circumstances of early adolescence inform the practice of accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers, as detailed in the standards that follow.

Developing High and Rigorous Standards for Accomplished Practice

In 1990, a committee of Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers and other English language arts educators began the process of developing advanced professional standards for teachers of students ages 11 to 15. The Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards Committee was charged with translating the Five Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards into a standards document that defines outstanding teaching in the field of English language arts.

In early 2000, a committee comprising original committee members and a new group of educators, including National Board Certified Teachers, was formed to examine and update *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards*. This second edition of the standards is the result of the committee's deliberations at meetings and its input into working drafts of the standards.

This NBPTS Standards document describes in observable form what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The standards are meant to reflect the professional consensus at this point about the essential aspects of accomplished practice. The deliberations of the Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards Committee were informed by various national and state initiatives on student and teacher standards that have been operating concurrently with the development of NBPTS Standards. As the understanding of teaching and learning continues to evolve over the next several years, *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards* will be updated again.

These standards recognize, reflect, and imply varied approaches to teaching. The National Board understands that such factors as the context in which teachers practice, the backgrounds and experiences they bring to their role, and the professional choices they make during their careers contribute to a diverse population of accomplished Early Adolescence English Language Arts teachers. Examples given throughout the standards illustrate a range of possible activities and strategies that accomplished teachers might employ to advance student learning and do not represent a prescriptive or exhaustive list. Teachers who use vastly different strategies may teach at the highest levels described in these standards.

An essential tension of describing accomplished practice concerns the difference between the analysis and the practice of teaching. The former tends to fragment the profession into any number of discrete duties, such as designing learning activities, providing quality explanation, modeling, managing the classroom, and monitoring student progress. Teaching as it actually occurs, in contrast, is a seamless activity.

Everything an accomplished teacher knows through study, research, and experience is brought to bear daily in the classroom through innumerable decisions that shape learning. Teaching frequently requires balancing the demands of several important educational goals. It depends on accurate observations of particular students and settings. And it is subject to revision on the basis of continuing developments in the classroom. The professional judgments that accomplished teachers make also reflect a certain improvisational artistry.

The paradox, then, is that any attempt to write standards that dissect what accomplished teachers know and are able to do will, to a certain extent, misrepresent the holistic nature of how teaching actually takes place. Nevertheless, the fact remains: Certain identifiable commonalties characterize the accomplished practice of English language arts teachers. The 16 standards that follow are designed to capture the craft, artistry, and understandings—both deep and broad—that contribute to the complex work that is accomplished teaching.

The Standards Format

Accomplished teaching appears in many different forms, and it should be acknowledged at the outset that these specific standards and explications are not the only way it could have been described. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished teaching, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of teaching that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but that are not discrete when they appear in practice.

The report follows a two-part format for each of the 16 standards:

I. ***Standard Statement***—This is a succinct statement of one vital aspect of the practice of the accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teacher. Each standard is expressed in terms of observable teacher actions that have an impact on students.

II. ***Elaboration***—This passage provides a context for the standard, along with an explanation of what teachers need to know, value, and do if they are to fulfill the standard. The elaboration includes descriptions of teacher dispositions toward students, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, and their stances on a range of ethical and intellectual issues that regularly confront them.

Finally, a word about order of presentation. The 16 standards have been organized around the critical nexus of education—student learning—and into three categories: (l) teacher actions that prepare the way for productive student learning; (2) teacher actions that directly advance student learning in the classroom; and (3) teacher actions that indirectly support student learning through long-range initiatives conducted, for the most part, outside the classroom. Such a "road map" for reading the document should not be taken too literally, because, as noted above, accomplished teaching is a holistic act in which the many facets of practice come together to advance student learning.

Early Adolescence/English Language Arts STANDARDS

(for teachers of students ages 11–15)

Second Edition

OVERVIEW

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers into the following 16 standards. The standards have been ordered to facilitate understanding, not to assign priorities. They each describe an important facet of accomplished teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice. These standards serve as the basis for National Board Certification in this field.

Preparing the Way for Productive Student Learning

I. Knowledge of Students (p. 7)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers systematically acquire specific knowledge of their students as individuals and use that knowledge to help develop students' literacy.

II. Knowledge of the Field (p. 11)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers know the field of English language arts and how to teach it to their students.

III. Engagement (p. 15)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers engage students in language arts learning and elicit a concerted academic effort from each of their students.

IV. Learning Environment (p. 19)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers create a caring and challenging environment in which all students actively learn.

V. Equity, Fairness, and Diversity (p. 23)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers are committed to the celebration of diversity, practice equity and fairness, and use a variety of texts to promote opportunities to learn acceptance and appreciation of others.

VI. Instructional Resources (p. 27)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers select, adapt, and use instructional resources to develop student literacy and further curriculum goals.

VII. Instructional Decision Making (p. 31)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers set attainable and worthwhile learning goals for students and develop meaningful learning opportunities, while extending to students an increasing measure of control over setting goals and choosing how those goals are pursued.

Advancing Student Learning in the Classroom

VIII. Reading (p. 35)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers promote reading development by ensuring that their students read a wide variety of texts and develop strategies for comprehending, interpreting, evaluating, and appreciating those texts.

IX. Writing (p. 41)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers provide instruction in the skills, processes, and knowledge needed for writing to ensure that their students write effectively across many genres and for a variety of purposes and audiences.

X. Listening, Speaking, and Viewing (p. 45)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers develop students' skills in listening, speaking, and viewing in many ways and for many purposes.

XI. Language Study (p. 49)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers teach students to gain proficiency in language use and strengthen student sensitivity to appropriate uses of language.

XII. Integrated Instruction (p. 53)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers integrate learning and learning activities within the English language arts classroom and across the disciplines.

XIII. Assessment (p. 57)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers use a range of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor and evaluate student progress, encourage student self-assessment, plan instruction, and report to various audiences.

Supporting Student Learning through Long-Range Initiatives

XIV. Self-Reflection (p. 61)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers constantly analyze and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their teaching.

XV. Professional Community (p. 65)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers contribute to the improvement of instructional programs, advancement of knowledge, and practice of colleagues.

XVI. Family Outreach (p. 69)
Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers work with families to serve the best interests of their children.

The pages that follow provide elaborations of each standard that discuss the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and habits of mind that describe accomplished teaching in the field.

Preparing the Way for Productive Student Learning

The first seven standards form the foundation for the instructional decisions made by Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers and are the basis for all the other standards. Only by knowing their students well can teachers consistently make instructional decisions that will further students' learning. And only by having deep and broad understandings of pedagogy and English language arts can teachers organize and deliver instruction that helps students build their own deep and broad understandings of this field.

Standard I: Knowledge of Students

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers systematically acquire specific knowledge of their students as individuals and use that knowledge to help develop students' literacy.

Accomplished teachers create classrooms that focus on students and their literacy development. In these classrooms, students take pride in their growing language facility and in their increasingly adventurous explorations of literature and other texts. Teachers[1] genuinely like the young people with whom they work; believe that improving students' literacy is vital to their students' future success and their overall quality of life; and communicate that belief, both in their words and through their nonverbal cues.

Accomplished teachers know that students' dispositions toward intellectual engagement vary and that many factors affect their attitudes toward learning. Believing that all students can learn, teachers are keenly aware that students think and learn in multiple and varied ways and demonstrate their proficiencies through a variety of behaviors, activities, and products. Because language competency builds on prior achievements and experiences, English language arts teachers make it a point to find out what knowledge and gifts each student brings to the classroom so that they can make informed choices of instructional strategies. Teachers gain knowledge about young adolescent learners, including an awareness and an appreciation of each student's cultural, linguistic, and ethnic heritage; family setting; socioeconomic status; sexual orientation; gender; disability; prior learning experiences; and personal interests, needs, and goals. For example, if a student hesitates to take part in class discussions, the teacher can impute a likely reason among possible explanations. One student has good language skills but is shy. Another is not yet confident enough in second-language ability to speak to the whole group. A third student comes from a home where it is inappropriate to be the center of attention. Yet another student sees no connection between personal interest and subject matter and therefore has little motivation to participate. Teachers then capitalize on this knowledge to help shape decisions in the classroom.

Class size and teaching load directly affect the depth of knowledge that teachers can acquire about students. Still, accomplished teachers make finding out about their students a priority and are resourceful in doing so. They systematically observe students using English and other languages in group settings. They may individually check oral reading skills, administer assessment

1. All references to teachers in this document, whether stated explicitly or not, refer to accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers.

exercises, and conduct private interviews. They also review students' school records, cumulative folders, and standardized test scores. They inspire students to write and talk about themselves and their interests, ideas, and conclusions. They are aware of what students are doing in other classrooms. They may visit with parents or other caregivers. They actively collaborate with other professionals at the school site, including the school nurse, counselors, English language development specialists, or special education teachers. On an informal basis, they make themselves available and approachable—in the hallways "between the bells," at extracurricular school events, and at community activities. After establishing a baseline of knowledge, they continue to gather information throughout the school year. They use this information to make instructional plans appropriate for each student.

Knowing students entails gaining an understanding of each student's capacity to read, write, speak, listen, and view in English and in other languages. This understanding includes specific knowledge of students for whom English is a new language, students with disabilities, students needing advanced challenges, and students needing extra support. Accomplished teachers adjust the curriculum to match the student in ways that promote learning within each student's optimal range of development. Targeting instruction that is challenging to a student while being sensitive to his or her developmental level ensures measurable growth and enhances the potential for student engagement with learning. For example, accomplished teachers know each student sufficiently well to recommend independent reading that matches each student's instructional or recreational reading level. If they are using the same book for the entire class, they know their students' reading levels well enough to adjust and vary their instructional strategies to meet the particular reading needs of individual students.

Teachers complement their knowledge of individual students with a broad perspective on patterns of adolescent development and language development. They gain this knowledge through classroom experience and knowledge of research. Teachers understand the unique characteristics of adolescent learners. They know that students mature at their own rate and that a wide variation in their developmental stages and life experiences within the same classroom is to be expected, accommodated, and valued. Teachers use their accumulated knowledge as a lens through which they view and interpret student behavior, enabling them to foster students' literacy development. The accomplished teacher has an eclectic array of strategies to support the adolescent student's learning and well-being. The teacher can strategically match the best practice with each child, differentiating instruction as needed.

"Knowing students" in a more global sense also includes being sufficiently conversant with youth culture: the television programs and movies students watch, the music they listen to, the Internet and computer software experiences they have, and the way they communicate with one another. Accomplished teachers familiarize themselves with the topics that interest their students and make connections between their students' experiences and their classes' explorations of language and literature. At the same time, teachers do not relate to young adolescents as peers but rather as ambassadors from the adult world—accessible, caring, and with vitally important knowledge to share.

Reflections on Standard I:

Standard II: Knowledge of the Field

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers know the field of English language arts and how to teach it to their students.

Accomplished teachers are aware of the complexity of defining the field of English language arts and the ramifications that such definitions might have on students as well as on what is taught and how it is presented. English language arts embraces the multiple facets of communication and is thus an ever-evolving and changing discipline. Nevertheless, teachers are aware that knowledge of the field of Early Adolescence/English Language Arts entails a rich synthesis of (a) knowledge of current research on the reading process and how students learn to read; (b) knowledge of texts—traditional and contemporary, fiction and nonfiction, print and nonprint;[2] (c) knowledge of current research on the writing process and how students learn to write; (d) knowledge of current research on speaking, listening, and viewing and the conventions of oral and visual communication; (e) knowledge of language and the role it plays in shaping all forms of communication; (f) knowledge of the patterns of thought and behavior characteristic of early adolescence; and (g) knowledge of current research in pedagogy.

Accomplished teachers know reading—both the processes used by skilled readers and the processes of learning to read. They know the processes and strategies that skilled readers use to decode, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate text, and they know how to teach these strategies to adolescents. Accomplished teachers know how readers combine resources from the text and from their prior knowledge to predict, construct, confirm, and revise understandings as they read. They know how to support students in their attempts to access and make sense of increasingly complex pieces of text. They know formal and informal, as well as summative and formative, instruments for assessing students' reading progress. Teachers know the particular problems that surround learning to read for adolescents, especially those who have experienced failure over many years of schooling, and they match appropriate research-based strategies with individual learners to further students' development as readers. Doing so may require anything from enhancing students' phonemic awareness and vocabulary development, to helping students comprehend story elements, to guiding students as they construct a critical analysis of a sophisticated text. Teachers can participate with professional ease in the conversations that surround the teaching of reading and can synthesize and select the best practices from sometimes conflicting views of reading instruction to shape appropriate classroom strategies. (See Standard VIII—*Reading*.)

Accomplished teachers know a wide range of high-quality written, spoken, and visual texts. These include traditional and contemporary classics of literature; young adult literature; informational texts of English language arts and subject-matter curricula; popular texts such as those found in magazines, newspapers, film, television, and radio; and electronic texts found on the Internet. Teachers know that in an age of information-rich technology, students need multiple literacies to communicate effectively, including the ability to "read"

2. The word "text" in this document, whether stated explicitly or not, refers to both print and nonprint text.

texts in all media and to make connections among different media. They know the distinctive features of various genres and how those features achieve their effects on audiences. Teachers know literary terminology and how an understanding of these elements helps students construct meaning from texts. They know the historical and cultural backgrounds of texts, and they know and use texts that authentically represent diversity in terms of culture, gender, region, and use of language. (See Standard VI—*Instructional Resources*.)

Accomplished teachers have knowledge of current research on writing as process and on how students learn to write. Teachers know what constitutes good writing, and they are able to write effectively. Teachers understand that writing is a complex, recursive process. They know that writing is a social act that grows out of authentic purposes and real audiences. Teachers understand the importance of both peer and teacher feedback, and they can provide feedback that is as respectful of the strengths and voices of individual writers as it is helpful to writers in coming to understand what makes a piece of writing effective and compelling to readers. Teachers know that the conventions of written language are best learned in the context of writing texts to be read by others, and they know how to weave instruction in language skills throughout the writing process. (See Standard IX—*Writing*.)

Accomplished teachers know that speaking, listening, and viewing are reciprocal behaviors that help students construct meaning from their world. They recognize that proficiency can be taught as both process and skill in ways similar to the teaching of reading and writing. Teachers know that speaking, listening, and viewing are most effectively taught within the context of communication. They understand that speaking is both a rhetorical and a multisensory activity, involving not only voice and diction but also nonverbal factors, such as space, body language, and physical setting. Teachers know that by learning to speak for varying purposes and audiences, students will become fluent, purposeful, and articulate oral users of the language. Teachers also know strategies that enable students to learn how to listen attentively; interpret verbal and nonverbal cues; assign meaning to oral discourse; and evaluate, remember, and respond intelligently and sensitively to what they hear. As visual communication has become an integral part of being literate in contemporary society, teachers know strategies for teaching students to become critical viewers, able to analyze visual language, interpret and evaluate media messages, and employ visual media as a powerful means of communication. (See Standard X—*Listening, Speaking, and Viewing*.)

Accomplished teachers know current theory and research about how language is learned and used in all forms of communication. This includes knowledge of the central role of constructing meaning as the driving force behind speaking, listening, writing, reading, and viewing. Teachers also understand that language changes over time and across contexts and that the effective use of language depends on purpose, audience, and situation. They understand the power of language—that particular language patterns privilege some groups and marginalize others, and that language can be used to influence the thoughts and actions of others. Knowledge of language also includes knowledge of the technical conventions of language, both oral and written, including the rules of grammar, spelling, and usage, as well as the consequences of not using these conventions. (See Standard XI—*Language Study*.)

Accomplished teachers are knowledgeable about the emotional, intellectual, social, and physical development of adolescents as a unique class of learners as well as the cultural

milieu in which their students live. They know that students need to be engaged as active learners. They understand the nature of motivation and motivational devices—including both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards—that engage adolescents through deliberate and strategically crafted language experiences. (See Standard I—*Knowledge of Students*.)

Accomplished teachers know the intricacies of teaching reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. This pedagogical knowledge enables teachers to transform their knowledge of the field into curriculum and teaching practices. Teachers know how to construct a design for instruction that promotes literacy development for all students. Teachers know the strategies involved in understanding and producing texts, and they can teach a wide range of skills that help students develop those strategies. Accomplished teachers possess a repertoire of techniques to teach students how to think critically and to use language effectively. (See Standard VII—*Instructional Decision Making*, Standard VIII—*Reading*, Standard IX—*Writing*, and Standard X—*Listening, Speaking, and Viewing*.)

Accomplished teachers know the district, state, and national standards that frame the curricula they teach, and they know how to develop standards-based instruction. They also understand the important role that assessment plays in teaching and learning. They know how to develop and use appropriate assessment tools in their classrooms; how to interpret standardized assessments; how to use data from multiple assessments to inform instruction; and how to communicate results to students, their parents,[3] and other members of the learning community.

Accomplished teachers are lifelong learners. They stay abreast of current research, issues, and theories to inform their practice. They do so by reading professional literature, participating in professional organizations and learning communities, and reflecting on their teaching. In short, teachers are able to navigate through the complexities of the field to create meaningful learning experiences for their students.

3. The word "parents" is used in this document to refer to the people who are the primary caregivers and guardians of children.

Reflections on Standard II:

Standard III: Engagement

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers engage students in language arts learning and elicit a concerted academic effort from each of their students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers constructively engage their students in literacy learning. They help students learn to participate actively in discussions of texts, share their ideas about writing, listen attentively to one another, and, in general, display their involvement in this field of study.

Teachers demonstrate a contagious enthusiasm for the language arts. It is important to them that students perceive the reality that language and literature are genuine sources of enjoyment and discovery. Although teachers are candid about their extensive knowledge and experiences in all the language arts, they do not project themselves as infallible. They are colearners, reading and writing alongside their students, reacting honestly to texts, demonstrating their openness to fresh interpretations of familiar texts, and engaging in the give-and-take of articulating and negotiating interpretations with students. They constantly model the idea that gaining knowledge and insight from the study of literature and other texts is intrinsically rewarding. By talking about their experiences as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers with their students, teachers demonstrate that false starts and mistakes are part of the learning process.

Teachers offer learning activities, reading selections, and writing assignments (some of which may be student-selected) that relate to the interests and concerns of young adolescents. Teachers put a great deal of energy and creativity into capturing the interest of their students at the outset of a lesson. Recognizing that young adolescents are developing a sense of self, teachers leave room for student-initiated language explorations. Teachers help students learn to use language processes as a way of gaining insight into and control over important issues in their lives, not as a series of irrelevant exercises.

Teachers maintain high expectations for the language development of every student, regardless of gender, disability, educational background, culture, socioeconomic status, or language background. Indeed, for some students, they have a vision of success that the students themselves might not have imagined. Because they know that all students can learn, teachers plan so that they will. However, teachers know that not all students learn in the same way and at the same rate, so they provide opportunities for all students to use language in creative and nonthreatening ways. Teachers' high expectations are accompanied by strategic instructional planning. Even when students experience difficulties, teachers maintain their high expectations; when students are already high achievers, teachers do not allow themselves or their students to slip into complacency.

Teachers know that genuine achievement motivates students to do their best. They recognize the satisfaction a student feels after composing a well-reasoned essay, developing a multimedia presentation, or engaging in exploratory conversations about text. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for all students to engage actively and successfully in expression and meaning making. For example, for students encountering a difficult literary text, teachers provide multiple

ways into the learning experience to help these students achieve. They may have students listen to audiotapes of the work, participate in small discussion groups, explore literary Web sites, role play a part of the action, or express their responses through original pieces of art or music. Such teachers acknowledge students' improvement in language arts and help students realize that their literacy skills are improving.

Reflections on Standard III:

Standard IV: Learning Environment

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers create a caring and challenging environment in which all students actively learn.

The quality of human associations in the classroom—how students interact with one another and with the teacher—is significant in fashioning a learning environment that favors the academic as well as the personal growth of young adolescents. Accomplished teachers know that students must be supported if they are to take creative risks, offer conjectures, question the assertions proposed by others, or find their own ideas challenged or validated. Accordingly, teachers work to create an atmosphere in which all students can develop competence in their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing skills without fear of failure or social stigmatization. This atmosphere also includes respect for diversity of culture, language, background, physical and mental condition, and experience as well as an assumption of mutual responsibility for the success of the learning community.

Teachers establish classroom cultures of trust and mutual respect in many ways. Perhaps most important is the personal example they set through their own demeanor. They are friendly, curious, and enthusiastic about texts and the uses of language and are supportive of each student's language initiatives. They are good listeners who carefully weigh each student's contribution to a discussion. They have a healthy sense of humor that enlivens the classroom yet avoids laughs at the expense of vulnerable young people. They are confident in their adult role and command respect, yet they also ignore good-natured irreverence aimed in their direction. They are caring, fair-minded, and supportive of each student's well-being.

Teachers use the wealth of experiences found in their students and communities to create rich literacy experiences. Teachers value diversity of language experience, cultural background, literary tradition, and ethnic heritage as a resource for students to explore in order to increase their understanding of one another and of the constantly evolving character of language. Teachers also work to familiarize themselves with the diverse backgrounds, languages, talents, and cultural components of the local community. Occasions for valuable literacy experiences can be provided through such varied resources as poets, writers, and storytellers from the community; newspapers or magazines that publish student articles, commentaries, or letters to the editors; libraries that have author readings or tutoring programs; and community events.

Teachers are also efficient classroom managers who know the value of using scarce resources—including instructional time—well. In addition to managing resources, they manage students effectively by establishing orderly and workable routines that maximize student productivity and by encouraging students to contribute productively to the class. Students know what is expected of them and feel confident and willing to participate because they are using language to serve important purposes. Teachers encourage students to participate as members of a learning community by creating open-ended tasks that require students to pay attention to the dynamics of their interactions and contributions to discourse. Teachers model meaningful interaction for students to emulate.

Teachers understand that classroom cohesion is largely a function of student engagement. When young adolescents are interested in what they are doing in school, the classroom becomes, in many respects, self-governing. By organizing language arts classes around texts that matter to their students and around a process of self-discovery through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers create a dynamic that favors learning. Nevertheless, these teachers also recognize that even the best of young adolescents can be expected to have a bad day from time to time. Accomplished teachers are skilled at preventing discipline problems through their consistent "classroom awareness," strategic grouping decisions, and judicious movements about the room. When problems do occur, teachers know how to handle them, firmly and fairly. They are skilled at deescalating confrontations and minimizing disruptions to the learning process. Additionally, teachers know how to recognize serious problems, such as physical or sexual abuse, drug or alcohol problems, or suicidal tendencies; they know how to seek professional support services for students dealing with these problems.

Strategies used to engage students in purposeful, positive behavior may look quite different from place to place. For example, a teacher might be understood as unduly strict to an outsider but be perceived by students as the "teacher who cares too much about me to let me slide by." A classroom that appears noisy and confusing may actually be effectively organized to support productive student work. The common denominator in all healthy learning climates is a foundation of mutual respect and concern for others that is shared by teacher and students.

Accomplished teachers use their knowledge of early adolescents in their classroom organizational decisions. Because social interplay with peers is highly valued among early adolescents, teachers arrange for frequent collaborative learning opportunities in which students can interact in small groups and teach one another about effective language use. Teachers do not simply form small groups and turn young adolescents loose; they teach students how to work together in groups. They provide a framework for successful group interaction. They understand that social skills are teachable, and they design instructional activities that show students how to be encouraging and respectful to one another while accomplishing a task.

Accomplished teachers make instructional grouping decisions that are consonant with their convictions about inclusion and community and that are appropriate to the various learning goals they pursue. They are equally comfortable employing whole-class, one-on-one, peer-group, cross-age-tutoring, and other grouping approaches, depending on the specific instructional purpose at hand. For example, they may employ heterogeneous, small-group working arrangements because such settings allow a greater number of students to play active roles in language manipulation and bring students of differing backgrounds and skills into contact with one another. Other times, they may group students according to similar ability for specific instructional purposes, such as word study targeted to a specific stage of development. Teachers know when each grouping mode is most appropriate and can articulate their rationale for the strategy chosen.

Accomplished teachers know that the classroom environment is as important to learning as the resources they select. They purposefully create learning environments and activities that are respectful and stimulating, encouraging students to develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing with confidence and enthusiasm.

Reflections on Standard IV:

Standard V: Equity, Fairness, and Diversity

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers are committed to the celebration of diversity, practice equity and fairness, and use a variety of texts to promote opportunities to learn acceptance and appreciation of others.

Accomplished teachers are committed to understanding and applying principles of equity, strength through diversity, and fairness. They foster the development and participation of all their students and understand that literacy, by its nature, encompasses diverse subject matter that builds on the unique characteristics of each learner. They infuse their teaching with examples and perspectives representing a broad range of cultures and backgrounds, and they actively encourage the participation of all students in learning.

Teachers promote the development of each individual's abilities. Teachers are committed to providing every student with the help needed to progress as an inquisitive, informed, responsible, literate human being. They understand that such growth is best supported by a collaborative learning community where all students participate fully in a comprehensive curriculum. Teachers offer all students equal access to meaningful learning opportunities within the language arts curriculum, and they hold all students to high, challenging standards. At the same time, accomplished teachers encourage all students to participate in learning experiences in ways that are instructionally sound for them as individual learners. They vary their strategies for doing so, for example, sometimes providing peer tutoring and interaction in place of teacher intervention.

Accomplished teachers value and respect diversity among students. Teachers know that the backgrounds of students in a single classroom invariably include a tremendous wealth and variety of human experiences, which provide the teacher with opportunities to create a rich environment for successful social interactions and meaningful learning. Teachers address issues of diversity proactively to promote equity and to ensure that all students—regardless of culture, language background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, physical and mental ability, or literacy experience—receive equal opportunities to learn and advance. They allocate instructional resources, including one-on-one attention, according to the unique needs of each student. Teachers may arrange students in heterogeneous small groups to facilitate interactions among pupils from different backgrounds and of different ability levels.

Teachers have welcoming attitudes and are eager to work with each of their students. Teachers understand the many ways in which students distinguish themselves from their peers, and they respond appropriately with strategies that will not only advance student learning but also improve understanding among teachers and students. Teachers appreciate and respect differences in the personalities and temperaments of students and in the various ways in which children acquire and show self-confidence. (See Standard I—*Knowledge of Students*.) They also foster in their students respect for and appreciation of others, regardless of personal and academic differences.

Accomplished teachers are attuned to the special characteristics of students with exceptionalities, such as physical or learning

disabilities; giftedness; and cognitive, social, emotional, or linguistic needs. They select and use appropriate instructional resources, including assistive technologies, and they modify the physical layout of the learning environment as needed. They are aware of the special attention that they must at times give to students for whom English is a new language, and they modify their instruction accordingly.

Teachers are sensitive to their students as cultural beings. They know how culture may affect the way students learn. They recognize that students of different cultures might come to the classroom with prior learning experiences that distinguish them from their peers, and teachers help students adjust to the norms of the classroom. Teachers work to include all students, to show that individual contributions are valued, and to ensure that each person is respected.

Not only do accomplished teachers accept and embrace the cultures of their students, they value and celebrate the richness that cultural diversity brings to the classroom, the nation, and the world. They understand the importance of respecting the cultural values and norms that students bring from home. They involve parents and other caregivers as resources in sharing the traditions of families. In this way and others, teachers promote understanding of and respect for diversity. (See Standard XVI—*Family Outreach*.) They know that contrasting cultural views exist and that not all cultures share the same values. Teachers understand that whereas most students identify with their own backgrounds, some may separate themselves from family traditions, adopt the characteristics or practices of another group, or wish to have no recognizable culture. Additionally, teachers acquaint students with cultures beyond their community to help prepare students for the demands of an increasingly interdependent world.

Teachers understand that cultures are dynamic and constantly evolving; therefore, teachers do not ever consider their cultural learning "complete." Accomplished teachers research concepts and topics they wish to explore with their students to make sure the learning experiences selected are relevant to students and authentic to the traditions and beliefs of the cultures being considered. To ensure authenticity, they consult current literature, experts among their colleagues and the community, and other reliable sources.

Accomplished teachers constantly seek out new resources that can be useful to their program. They teach by using texts drawn from a range of traditions; from both male and female writers; and from various ethnicities, cultures, and languages. (See Standard VI—*Instructional Resources*.) Teachers help students compare and contrast what they read, hear, and view in class with what they are familiar with in their everyday lives, thereby helping their students recognize and validate similarities and differences. Further, teachers help students investigate the different functions, purposes, and roles that literacy plays in their own communities and in various cultures. In helping their students examine the roles and purposes of texts and writers in diverse cultures, accomplished teachers generate learning experiences that foster respect for various customs across time and place. Even when accomplished teachers work in areas in which cultural diversity is limited, they strive to introduce students to texts of many cultures.

Accomplished teachers consider the effects of their own cultural backgrounds, biases, values, and personal experiences on their teaching. They also recognize and acknowledge their own cultural perspectives, personal aesthetics, and philosophical biases. They know how these factors may affect their interactions with students whose backgrounds, beliefs, values, or personalities may

be significantly different from their own. Through reflective behavior, teachers make sure that fairness and respect for individuals permeate all their instructional practices. Teachers seek to achieve mutual understanding with students and treat each student fairly and with honor, dignity, and respect.

Teachers guard against the expression of bias and stereotypes in their classrooms. They firmly believe that students are entitled to be proud of their roots and personal identities. These teachers actively and positively challenge sexist, racist, and other biased or demeaning behaviors (e.g., teasing about physical appearance), regardless of the source. They know that stereotypical thinking and prejudicial behavior in the language, play, and social interactions of students result, in part, from ignorance of individual differences and commonalities. Therefore, teachers appreciate and build on the diversity and commonalities they find in their classrooms so that those diverse and common elements become integral parts of the exploration of the world and human experience. Diversity serves as a source of strength and dynamism for the learning community. For example, teachers may tailor literature circles, author studies, or research projects to reflect the diversity of the classroom or the larger community.

Accomplished teachers are alert to stereotypes and to racist, sexist, and other prejudiced content in written resources, works of art, media, and current events. They understand the demeaning nature of such content, and they select instructional materials and experiences that promote positive images of people of different races, genders, religions, cultures, sexual orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. In this way, teachers build, enhance, and support the self-respect, self-confidence, and self-worth of children. (See Standard VI—*Instructional Resources*.) In some instances, teachers may use texts that contain biased language or stereotypes, but they are careful to point out such content to their students and explain it in the context of the specific work. They also help students develop the skills to critique such bias independently.

In sum, accomplished teachers uphold high standards and expectations for all students. They create a classroom community that fosters respect for the many forms of diversity, and they provide an array of instructionally sound resources that promote learning for all students.

Reflections on Standard V:

Standard VI: Instructional Resources

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers select, adapt, and use instructional resources to develop student literacy and further curriculum goals.

Accomplished English language arts teachers are familiar with a wide variety of instructional resources available to their students and realize the importance of making informed choices that support their curriculum and benefit their students. They provide students with access to a variety of texts—ranging from traditional print media to computer software and electronic and interactive media—to accommodate students of all ability levels and interests. Teachers also use multiple sources to expand their own knowledge of instructional resource selection.

Teachers understand that the definition of *text* has expanded over time. Today, *text* is defined as any media that can be interpreted, analyzed, and evaluated. Text for the English language arts classroom now includes the traditional format of poetry, short stories, novels, plays, folklore, essays, and biographies, as well as such texts as TV programs; films; speeches; music and lyrics; advertisements; cartoons; magazine articles; oral discourse; Internet sources such as Web sites, e-books, and digital curricula; CD-ROMs; works of art; dramatizations; practical documents such as instructional manuals; and student writings. Accomplished teachers are aware of the growing number of types of text—oral, visual, and written—that they can integrate into their instruction.

Teachers understand that the texts they ask students to read, hear, or view must warrant and reward their close attention. Teachers know and are able to apply criteria for judging the quality of print and nonprint texts. These criteria include such qualities as the imaginative use of language; the development of complex, nonstereotypical characters; and the sensitive portrayal of human experience. By employing such criteria, teachers help students learn to make their own choices of texts on the basis of an emerging understanding of quality in a range of genres and forms. Teachers recognize that texts are a spur to improving reading skills when they address profound questions of values and the age-old dilemmas of the human condition. Teachers take seriously their duty to make available to all students the collective wisdom and insight available from reading and thinking about a generous cross section of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, prose, and drama that is drawn from the written and oral traditions of literature. In the end, text selections help students become more critical readers, writers, viewers, speakers, and listeners and more effective users of language.

Young people read avidly for all the reasons adults do: to escape the bounds of their day-to-day existence, to learn about the world and be entertained, to laugh and cry, to live other lives, and to think more perceptively about their own. Teachers understand that the texts they choose for study must appeal to young adolescents, whether spontaneously or by virtue of the connections that accomplished teachers build for their students. Teachers recognize the qualities that may make texts appealing to young adolescents, such as the treatment of universal issues and concerns with which all students can grapple,

the presence of descriptive details drawn from contemporary culture, the selection of unfamiliar or exotic settings, and the use of well-developed characters with whom students can easily identify.

In choosing texts to be analyzed by the class as a whole or to be read by individual students, accomplished teachers are able to articulate the reasons for their selections. In general, teachers balance numerous considerations in making these important decisions. Teachers may select texts on the basis of their thematic content; appeal to young adolescents; or social, cultural, or historical value among other considerations. Accomplished teachers combine their extensive knowledge of text with their knowledge of the literacy skills, social backgrounds, and personal interests of their students to make sound resource decisions for the class as a whole and for individual students.

Teachers know that different kinds of texts appeal to different students and use informal and formal means to sample students' reading interests. They provide students with a wide range of optional texts from the long list of well-written works that give voice to the perennial concerns of young people and their pride in their emerging sense of self. Teachers also find and adapt texts as well as teaching strategies to ensure that all students get the full benefit of the English language arts program. Teachers use a range of resources to provide multiple paths to literacy learning for students of every ability level and learning style, including students with exceptional needs, students for whom English is a new language, gifted students, and reluctant readers. These sources may include, but are not limited to, printed texts geared toward different reading levels; illustrated texts; and various nonprint materials, such as sound recordings, CD-ROMs, or artifacts.

Teachers are aware of their students' interests in a variety of media and technologies and are adept at employing these resources in productive, thought-provoking ways. Teachers work to integrate media and technologies into opportunities for their students to meet learning goals in the classroom. Teachers also help students understand the practical applications of media and technologies by giving them opportunities to produce various "products"—for example, newspapers, posters, skits, stories, Web pages, and videos—that are meant to be shared with different audiences, such as parents, peers, and the community. Accomplished teachers know how to help select media and technological resources that aid students in the production of text.

Teachers know that studying texts of many cultures is essential for all students. A goal of English language arts instruction is to prepare students to live in our increasingly diverse society; therefore, teachers familiarize themselves with texts from other cultures and traditions and expose students to a wide range of materials. When selecting high-quality texts representative of world diversity, teachers affirm works by authors of both genders and a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. In evaluating the authenticity and value of the cultural aspects of texts, teachers may enlist the help of members of the given cultures, seek the opinions of colleagues, or read the work of critics. Teachers are careful to present information about the culture and historical contexts in which texts were produced. They give students strategies to help them evaluate and question texts and see how they offer unique representations of the world.

The rapid increase in the availability of information that can be accessed by teachers and students provides new challenges in selecting resources. In addition to engaging in an ever-widening selection process themselves, accomplished English language arts teachers show students how to identify, retrieve, evaluate, use, and synthesize information from multiple sources. They help students use traditional written sources as well as electronic and Internet sources when available. Particularly with the Internet, they know

and share with students numerous ways of determining the credibility of information. Accomplished teachers also familiarize students with the concepts of copyright and plagiarism, helping them understand the distinctions between using a source as the basis for original work and using material in inappropriate ways. They teach students basic copyright guidelines and how to cite sources in currently accepted formats. Teachers offer specific guidance in the use of electronic sources, which students may not automatically perceive as being governed by copyright law.

Accomplished teachers are prepared to cope with the recurring problem of text censorship. Because they believe that early adolescent students benefit from reading important and thought-provoking texts, they stand ready to defend students' rights to read and learn. They keep parents and other representatives of the community apprised of their text selections and deal constructively with individuals who object to the inclusion of specific works. If faced with a censorship dispute, accomplished teachers follow procedures, discussing with community members and state and local authorities the value of exploring different viewpoints. Ultimately, teachers proceed within the parameters established by local and state policies.

Accomplished teachers share resources and strategies for the use of text in the curriculum with media specialists, colleagues, and others. They use information from learned societies, institutions of higher learning, professional journals, state departments of education, and electronic resources to aid in the selection of instructional materials. They continually search for effective texts to use in their classrooms.

Accomplished teachers recognize that appropriate instructional resources are a vital element of providing language arts instruction to students. They know the importance of being able to select, adapt, use, and justify a wide variety of instructional resources in their classrooms.

Reflections on Standard VI:

Standard VII: Instructional Decision Making

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers set attainable and worthwhile learning goals for students and develop meaningful learning opportunities, while extending to students an increasing measure of control over setting goals and choosing how those goals are pursued.

Accomplished teachers operate with a sense of purpose in the classroom. They stay abreast of current research, technology, and issues in education. They are aware that social and literacy practices drive instruction. They know their field and their students, including the high caliber of work that early adolescents are capable of producing when students perceive the development of language processes and the exploration of literature as relevant to their own lives. Accordingly, teachers maintain a delicate balance; they encourage self-directed learning on the part of each student but always gauge student progress in terms of ambitious, long-term learning goals.

Educational goal setting is an interactive process. In many cases, instructional goals are defined in broad terms at the national, state, and district levels, but accomplished teachers are not limited by externally determined goals or assessments. Within this framework, teachers establish long-term learning goals that are based on student needs. Accomplished teachers also know how to use standards and goals to create purposeful instruction. Teachers allow student involvement and direction in goal setting because authentic tasks—tied to real-world situations—often lead to ambitious goals. For example, if the goal is for students to become adept at writing a persuasive essay, the learning strategy might consist of an activity in which the students write letters to another person or group with whom they disagree on a timely issue in their lives. Teachers carefully negotiate with students a steadily increasing measure of control over how to pursue learning goals for two major reasons. First, teachers recognize that young adolescents work hardest when they feel a sense of ownership in what they are doing. Second, the ultimate goal of education—cultivating independent, self-reliant learners—requires students to develop a sense of self-direction.

Therefore, in carrying out learning activities, accomplished teachers adjust their practice, as appropriate, on the basis of student assessment, both formal and informal. They provide many alternative avenues to the same learning destination. These teachers realize that a variety of pedagogical styles can be successful in the classroom. They also recognize the difference between the expected grumbling of students faced with a difficult assignment and fundamental alienation from a learning task. They make midcourse corrections in their instructional plans when they see that an activity is not promoting student learning. Their teaching repertoire does not consist of isolated “tricks”; it takes place within purposeful instructional frameworks that guide teachers in making thoughtful choices when confronting particular needs.

The planning process in an accomplished teacher’s classroom is inclusive because every student is important. Accomplished teachers do not give up on their students. If one approach to stimulating curiosity and constructive participation does not work, they try another, and another, until they find

a strategy that succeeds—all the while realizing that the threshold of success may vary from student to student. Because language facility cannot be transmitted, teachers allow for its development by giving students constant opportunities to engage actively in meaning-making and expression about issues and texts that matter to them. Most important, accomplished teachers strive to engage all students as active participants in their own learning, gradually increasing the degree of responsibility each is expected to assume.

Reflections on Standard VII:

Advancing Student Learning in the Classroom

The way teachers make decisions and implement their curriculum in a flexible, appropriate, and creative manner provides the most visible and, arguably, the most important demonstration of excellence in teaching. The next six standards describe the ways teachers advance student knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the language arts curriculum and the important goals and purposes that guide teachers in their planning and instructional decision making.

Standard VIII: Reading

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers promote reading development by ensuring that their students read a wide variety of texts and develop strategies for comprehending, interpreting, evaluating, and appreciating those texts.

Reading is the process of constructing meaning from text. It is also a developmental process, one that changes in predictable ways as students read more, acquire new strategies, and learn more about the world. Every stage is influenced by several key factors—the purpose for reading; the knowledge, interest, and skills the reader brings to the task; and the nature of the text.

Accomplished teachers help students become active readers before, during, and after reading. They teach students to engage in purposeful reading that builds on the knowledge and experience that students bring to the classroom. They teach students to begin with clear goals in mind for their reading and to evaluate whether the text, and their reading of it, is meeting their goals. Teachers demonstrate to students how to construct, revise, and question the meanings made during reading, frequently making predictions and inferences and gauging the accuracy of both in light of evidence from the text. Teachers provide students with many targeted strategies to facilitate students' reading, such as graphic organizers, guided reading experiences, teacher and student think-aloud protocols, probing discussions, and creative extensions of the text. Teachers help students monitor their understanding, make decisions about how to adjust their reading—what to read carefully, what to read quickly, what not to read, and what to reread. Teachers explain the importance of thinking about the authors of the text—their style, beliefs, intentions, and historical milieu—to deepen interpretation. They teach students to evaluate the text's quality and value and to react to the text in a range of ways: intellectually, emotionally, and aesthetically.

Teachers recognize that readers often read different types of texts differently. They teach students to identify a purpose for reading and then to use the salient features of the text to achieve their purpose. For example, if a narrative text is being read for pleasure and for understanding human behavior, teachers may guide students to discover the elements of writing that appeal to the student—for example, syntax, diction, or tone—as well as the rich detail of character. If an expository text is being read for information, the teacher may help students identify the organizational patterns the author uses to present the information; they may ask students, for example, to construct and revise a summary as a graphic display of what they have read.

Teachers also help students understand that the same text can be read differently, as in reading a biography either for precise information or for narrative pleasure.

Accomplished teachers support the development of readers by assessing where their students are along the developmental continuum. To achieve this end, teachers determine the instructional needs of students by observing their literacy behaviors and using a variety of formative and summative assessments, such as oral retelling, paraphrasing activities, a variety of comprehension assessments, everyday work samples, and formal written-response prompts. Teachers know that standardized tests are one way to assess a student's reading ability, and they are aware of how standardized assessments can open or close important doors for students. Above all, they know that it takes multiple sources of evidence collected over time to develop a complete picture of a student's growth and accomplishment as a reader; they do not base judgments about student reading competence on any one assessment.

Teachers also take advantage of assessment opportunities that are embedded in their instruction. They design and use activities that permit students, in line with their stage of development, to demonstrate their comprehension, interpretation, evaluation, and appreciation of a full range of texts, including texts from the Internet and the popular press. This set of strategies includes traditional comprehension and response assignments, but it also includes assessments of the author's purpose and craft, and it extends to response through classroom discussions, role play, reader's theatre, musical performances, or multimedia presentations.

Accomplished teachers understand and can meet the needs of the different types of students in their classrooms. These students include struggling readers, reluctant readers, competent readers, advanced readers, and readers learning English as a new language. Teachers are especially aware that many of their students exhibit instructional needs that resemble those of younger readers; they also know how to address these reading difficulties in strategic ways that demonstrate sensitivity to the social and emotional needs of the adolescent. For example, an adolescent who needs more experience with phonemic or morphemic awareness would be offered developmentally appropriate materials that would respect the student's chronological age and interests. Teachers use their knowledge about the reading process and the particular strengths and needs of each type of reader to craft teaching and learning activities most likely to accelerate their students' motivation and reading development. They know, for instance, that one student will benefit from explicit instruction in decoding strategies; a second from an ambitious vocabulary program; a third from an incentive program to improve his participation and engagement in classroom reading activities; and a fourth from a carefully sequenced plan to support her as she accepts more responsibility for her own learning by meeting advanced reading challenges. Teachers work with all students, including students learning English as a new language and students with exceptional abilities or disabilities, to find ways to improve their reading skills.

Accomplished teachers know the fundamental skills and strategies that all readers need, and they possess a repertoire of instructional approaches to meet those needs. They know that the ability to decode words effortlessly and to understand their meaning is fundamental to silent reading, which is an essential skill for all readers. Teachers know how to promote the study of words as a basis for expanding vocabulary. Knowing that reading and writing skills strongly complement one another, teachers point out structural literary devices—such as analogies, metaphors, and symbolism—in the setting in which they occur. They encourage students to make connections between what they read and the texts they produce. They know that reading is the

single greatest source of new vocabulary for readers, and they guide students in the technique of deciphering word meaning from context.

Accomplished teachers know the features characteristic of different genres and how those features affect understanding and response. They teach features of particular genres, such as meter in poetry, plot in fiction, or graphics in advertisements. By emphasizing these features, teachers help students comprehend the text, analyze the author's purpose, and make intertextual connections.

Accomplished teachers know that literature involves interpretation and that student responses will vary according to a students' background knowledge, interest, and purpose for reading. Teachers, therefore, validate interpretations that are supported by evidence. This attitude promotes critical reading and encourages readers to articulate insightful interpretations of increasingly demanding text. When interpretations disagree or do not make sense, discussion inevitably leads to a closer examination of evidence found in the text. Teachers plan a wide variety of activities that encourage students of varying abilities and strengths to demonstrate their comprehension, interpretation, and appreciation of text, such as small- and large-group discussions, multimedia presentations, art, music, readers' theatre, or dance. Accomplished teachers are committed to making textual and interpretive experiences available to all students.

Accomplished teachers help students make connections between the literature they are reading and other texts, literature and their own experiences, and literature and the world in which they live. (See Standard III—*Engagement*.) Teachers provide literary experiences for students that allow students to gain new perspectives, grapple with universal ideas and dilemmas, and develop an awareness of the richness and complexity of human life. Teachers help students see the importance of high-quality literature, including both traditional and contemporary classics and titles from the wide array of young adult selections appearing each year that address the human condition. Accomplished teachers also help students develop their own criteria for judging literary merit. By giving students the opportunity to read and analyze high-quality texts representing diversity with respect to culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, region, and physical or mental condition, they also help students understand the diverse world in which they live.

As with literature, accomplished teachers use informational texts to help students understand the world. They make sure that their students understand the purposes of reading informational texts, not only in schools but also in everyday life—at work, in the community, and at home. They make sure that students know how to read and interpret the full range of informational texts, including those found in textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and the popular press and on the Internet. Teachers also use informational texts in concert with fiction to support student learning.

Teachers encourage lifelong reading habits and contribute to the adolescent's enjoyment of reading by providing time for individualized reading during which students may explore texts of their own choosing. Teachers also promote independent reading by helping students select texts that match their interests, reading levels, and need to expand their personal horizons. (See Standard VI—*Instructional Resources*.) Creating rich opportunities to read encourages students to expand their growing tastes and their emerging critical and analytical skills.

Accomplished teachers explore media and technological texts with students, asking students to think about and discuss how print and nonprint texts are similar to and different

from one another. For example, teachers may have their students compare camera angles with point of view, music with mood, and visual settings with written descriptions of settings. Young adolescents are often greatly influenced by television; teachers can capitalize on this widespread interest and influence by showing them how the skills of critical reading of printed text also apply to media texts. Television provides opportunities for increasing student awareness of the ways in which verbal and visual messages are used to influence their opinions, emotional response, and behavior. Teachers also provide students with instruction in critically reading and evaluating such new texts as Web sites and the Internet; for example, they might discuss how to recognize legitimate search engines and the importance of seeking corroborating evidence from multiple sources. Aware of how media and technology have broadened the description of a literate person, teachers find ways to use technology creatively to achieve language arts goals.

Teachers show students that reading is a complex activity, but one that is typically both satisfying and productive. Accomplished teachers enable students to be successful with this complex activity by understanding their purpose for reading and by capitalizing on their knowledge, interest, and skills. They offer a supportive environment that provides a shared reference point from which students can explore questions of values, attitudes, and beliefs and realize that mastery of reading skills is critical for success in school and life.

Reflections on Standard VIII:

Standard IX: Writing

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers provide instruction in the skills, processes, and knowledge needed for writing to ensure that their students write effectively across many genres and for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Writing is the process of discovering, formulating, and refining one's thoughts to communicate ideas for a specific purpose and audience. Writing helps the writer clarify attitudes, define an identity, create new worlds, relate to others, and discover his or her own thinking. Through writing, students can inform, persuade, beguile, explain, impress, entertain, or otherwise affect an audience. Writing draws on a complex web of social and cognitive skills that take time and effort to acquire.

Knowledge about writing as a process, along with knowledge about the temperament of early adolescents, informs the pedagogy of English language arts teachers. Teachers understand that writing is a complex, recursive thinking process that requires the writer, whether consciously or not, to use several more specific cognitive activities on the way to a polished manuscript. The teacher's task is to bring these complex processes under deliberate mastery by the student.

Teachers recognize that writing is a social act that has importance in students' daily lives. Teachers provide students with a clear understanding of the connections among purpose, audience, and form. Accomplished teachers are adept at instructing students in the characteristics that distinguish various purposes and the contribution each makes to effective writing. For example, they provide examples of writing that are structured to persuade, inform, and entertain, as well as the ways these purposes interrelate. They also help students develop specific purposes, such as to persuade a friend to join a club or explain the value of a favorite book.

Accomplished teachers understand that the purposes for writing grow out of having something to say to people who matter to the writer. Teachers, therefore, take care to connect students' writing to particular audiences, including their peer audience. Teachers ask students to share informal and formal writings with one another as a way of establishing the reality and importance of this peer audience. Teachers also help students expand their audiences so that student writing takes on importance outside the classroom as well. For instance, they encourage students to write letters to the editors of local newspapers, create advertisements for school events, or write and perform dramatic presentations. Teachers publish student writing so that students have opportunities to perceive one another as authors and to develop genuine motivations for revising their work. To give credibility to these publication efforts, teachers also seek opportunities to disseminate student work in the school and beyond.

Teachers understand that there are many styles of writing and many voices appropriate for particular audiences and purposes. Not only do writers develop this range of possibilities, but they also work on their distinctive style and voice. Teachers also know that the forms, approaches, tools, styles, and conventions used in writing in different genres that can assist students in communicating their ideas. They help students tunderstand the relationship between form and function. They guide students to understand the power of word choice to create tone and to affect meaning. (See Standard XI—*Language Study*.) In addition, teachers know that inexperienced writers exhibit predictable patterns as they

attempt various composition tasks. For example, when asked to write a descriptive passage, young adolescents will commonly present a generalization rather than create a vivid sensory image demonstrating the look, smell, taste, or sound of the subject. Teachers are aware of these common patterns and provide directed instruction and vivid models to help students develop more effective patterns.

Accomplished teachers are aware that grammar and usage are most effectively taught in the context of writing for real purposes and audiences. Therefore, they take advantage of the texts that students produce as contexts for representing and teaching the conventions of language. As students realize the importance in their own writing of such matters as writing in complete sentences and avoiding run-ons and fragments by using periods, semicolons, and conjunctions, they come to appreciate the utility of mastering conventions and become motivated to do so.

Writers vary widely in how they orchestrate the creative process and in the kinds of support they need during composition. Teachers help students understand writing as a process of thinking and rethinking, writing and rewriting. They teach the cognitive strategies that produce high-quality writing, transforming the complexities of writing into tasks that are meaningful, accessible, and, above all, achievable for their students. Accomplished teachers know the infrastructure of effective writing. For example, they may provide their students with directed instruction in the areas of organization, development of ideas and evidence, effective use of vocabulary, variety in sentence structure, tone, usage, and finding one's own voice.

Teachers know that writing well is a skill best acquired through active practice and that students are most motivated to write when they are allowed to address issues and ideas that have meaning in their lives. They give students many opportunities to write. Teachers nurture their students' enthusiasm for writing by sponsoring informal writing activities (such as free writing, daily journals, reader responses to texts, note taking, listing, and question generating) that help students discover that they have something to say. Teachers also understand that writing to learn is a valuable activity, and they encourage students to use writing to assist their learning across all subjects in the curriculum.

Teachers are themselves competent writers who write regularly, sharing with students their own strategies, frustrations, and insights into solving a broad array of composition problems. They can demonstrate to their students how to craft effective sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Teachers know how to organize a piece of writing that uses a logical order by the use of thesis statements, topic sentences, examples, elaboration, and a strong conclusion. Their writing is cogent, expressing substantive ideas and marshalling evidence in a compelling manner to affect an audience in ways that fulfill the writer's purpose. Teachers know how to construct carefully worded sentences with particular attention to a variety of sentence patterns and rhetorical devices such as order of importance, cause and effect, or chronological order. Teachers may use their own drafting processes as one among many models to help students make progress in their development as writers. Teachers demonstrate for all students, including students for whom English is a new language and those with exceptional abilities or challenges, ways to improve their writing.

Teachers recognize that students need both private and public opportunities to examine and revise their work. Teachers encourage students to examine their own writing and reflect on their work. To assist students in these personal reflections, teachers provide exemplary models, clear expectations, suggested strategies, and opportunities for writing that allow students to compare and improve their own writing.

Teachers understand the public aspects of feedback and reflection. They know the importance of peer feedback and train students to help one another with writing. Teachers guide students in the techniques of peer conferencing, building a community of writers in the classroom. Teachers also provide constructive responses to student texts that the students can emulate in their reactions to one another's writing. A teacher's direct feedback about student work—tailored to the individual student's piece of writing—helps students realize the impact that their words have on the reader and thus helps students think about how a specific composition might be changed to achieve communicative intent better. By using individual, small-group, and whole-class approaches, teachers integrate instruction on skills and on strategies for organizing and clarifying ideas to help students become more powerful writers. Accomplished teachers maximize a wide variety of productive feedback opportunities for students.

Writing is challenging work for everyone, novice and experienced writer alike. Good writing takes time and patience. Accordingly, teachers motivate their students by encouraging them to write about issues that matter in their lives and by frequently demonstrating the impact their writings have on classmates and other audiences. They also motivate their students by supporting what students bring to their writing and rapidly moving toward instruction for improving the students' writing. Such teachers respond to student writings first and foremost as trusted adults interested in understanding what the student-author has to say.

Teachers use various means of assessment, and they include students prominently in the process. Teachers may have their students collect their writings over time to monitor progress. They may have pairs of students read and orally retell each other's work to determine how successfully it communicates ideas. They may provide students with a tape recording of their work read aloud by the teacher to demonstrate the effect of punctuation, syntax, and paragraph construction on the way a piece of writing is read. They may ask students to help create rubrics or other tools for critiquing writing. Teachers are aware that standardized writing tests may give a limited perspective on students' writing ability, and they are careful to evaluate all such instruments for validity. (See Standard XIII—*Assessment.*)

Teachers recognize that the nature and the presentation of writing have changed with the development of technology. The ability to manipulate text easily can blur the distinctions among composing, editing, and revising. The ability to publish text easily has opened up new possibilities for production in the classroom. Teachers use a range of writing projects that may include graphics and can be presented as brochures, multimedia presentations, Web pages, and other formats. Teachers realize the importance of learning and teaching about emerging writing conventions that are unique to technology, such as e-mail protocol. Teachers use available technology in ways that suit the curriculum and the developmental levels of students and that help students develop skill as writers.

Accomplished teachers encourage their students' writing efforts as a means of communication and enjoyment and also as a valuable and marketable lifelong skill. They demonstrate the importance of clear written communication in a variety of personal and career tasks. Most important, accomplished teachers provide students with many opportunities to write, and with clear criteria for writing, so that students can grow as writers and can know that with some effort and reflection on their part, they can find satisfactory and compelling ways to communicate their ideas.

Reflections on Standard IX:

Standard X: Listening, Speaking, and Viewing

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers develop students' skills in listening, speaking, and viewing in many ways and for many purposes.

Listening, speaking, and viewing provide the foundation for language development and are important lifelong skills. They are reciprocal behaviors and provide primary vehicles for making sense of the world, communicating with others, and discovering human values and important ideas. Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that listening, speaking, and viewing involve complex language processes that require students to construct meaning in ways analogous to the construction of meaning through writing or reading.

Teachers structure classroom activities to encourage students to listen critically, aesthetically, and empathetically. They help students set purposes for listening. Students learn how to receive and evaluate information, follow oral directions, respond appropriately to verbal and nonverbal cues and feedback, pick out main ideas and significant details, and respect and appreciate the free expression of others. An accomplished teacher's goal is to develop active listeners who have a purpose for listening; process what they hear; and are attentive, open-minded, and respectful.

Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers give their students opportunities to view and discuss photographs, logos, films, billboards, advertisements, Web sites, TV programs, plays, works of art, musical performances, speeches, magazines, and other visual resources. They teach their students how to be discriminating viewers who can analyze visual aspects of text and can recognize bias and propaganda. For example, by showing a film version of a novel under study or a film that has similar themes, teachers can help students appreciate the unique crafting of another medium of narrative communication, as well as enhance students' understanding of two texts. By asking students to compare a television news broadcast of an event with a newspaper report of the same event, the teacher can help students become sensitive to the many different ways that point of view is conveyed.

Teachers show their students how the world is translated by various media and how media are produced. They explain the ways in which media reflect the values of a society. They also discuss media ethics and the appropriate uses of different media. They discuss written genres in the context of various media presentations. In addition, "viewing" in the Early Adolescence English language arts classroom involves the use and production of visual language. Teachers design instruction so that students can experiment with communicating visually, from varying the font size and integrating graphics into their written work, to planning, scripting, and producing short films or multimedia presentations. Teachers take advantage of the motivating nature of various media to encourage creative and critical thinking among their students.

Accomplished teachers facilitate classroom conversation. They ask open-ended questions that genuinely seek information and place value on eliciting student opinions, not just a "yes" or "no" or one-word answer. They include all students in the conversation and listen carefully to what students have to say. In general, they work toward effective class discussion systematically—demonstrating it,

coaching it, and gradually allowing increasingly independent student interactions. In these teachers' classrooms, students can be found engaging in exploratory conversations about texts. Students in such classes pay attention to one another's comments about texts, ask each other questions, challenge one another, defend their individual opinions, and work cooperatively toward reaching consensus or clarifying and understanding differing perspectives about matters of urgency to them and their peers. For such students, speaking and listening are often key activities for self-discovery.

Teachers know that improving oral expression is important to the development of the literacy skills of all students—including students with exceptional needs and students for whom English is a new language—and thus give them abundant opportunities to take part actively in challenging uses of speech. Such activities might include student participation in small-group or whole-class discussions of texts, debates, mock trials, oratorical advocacy, impromptu or extemporaneous speaking, and storytelling. Teachers are sensitive to cultural differences that may cause some students to be reluctant to speak and others to be more loquacious; they respectfully elicit greater participation from quieter students and work to maintain a balance among speakers so that everyone's contributions are heard. Teachers are also aware of students who may have particular learning difficulties that affect oral language, such as students with auditory processing difficulties, and teachers work with such students to ensure that they participate in the oral discourse of the classroom.

Teachers employ a range of drama activities—including simulations, role play, improvisation, pantomime, readers' theatre, and skits—to help students explore alternative perspectives and attitudes associated with real and fictional worlds. These activities stimulate enthusiasm for texts and serve as catalysts for engagement with texts. Creative dramatics can be used to assist in predicting, comprehending, and extending texts. Alternative pathways for understanding texts can be helpful for all students, but may be particularly well suited for students who are reluctant readers and for students with exceptional needs or challenges. Students for whom English is a new language may also benefit from the use of presentations, absorbing new concepts and vocabulary that may not be understandable to them in written form.

Teachers help students develop the presentation skills necessary to communicate their ideas to specific audiences. They help students develop public speaking styles, use vocabulary and tone to meet the formality of the situation, and organize material to maintain interest and enhance understanding. Teachers also help students choose appropriate visual aids, technological tools, and presentation software to enhance presentations. Accomplished teachers understand that technological tools can help mediate the difficulties of some adolescent speakers. Assistive technologies, such as speech synthesizers, can also help students with physical challenges express their ideas more effectively. Teachers also teach students to be members of an attentive audience. For example, they teach students to take appropriate notes, be active and appreciative listeners, and provide constructive feedback.

Accomplished teachers know that, as with exploratory experiences in writing, students sometimes struggle when asked to think out loud, speculate in front of others, and compose publicly. Thus, teachers create a trusting classroom environment in which all students can and will risk participation in oral classroom activities. (See Standard IV—*Learning Environment.*) Teachers are aware of and respect cultural differences related to speaking and listening. Teachers know that speech varies in different social and cultural contexts. They understand that the purpose for speaking

determines the style and form of the speech, and they demonstrate this idea to their students. They validate linguistic and dialectal variations within the classroom community—for example, the highly idiomatic speech of some urban communities or the regional speech patterns of some Native American tribes. Teachers also provide resources for students to learn about and appreciate language diversity. (See Standard XI—*Language Study*.)

Teachers know that the oral language of students provides a window through which teachers can view a student's stage of literacy development. They use the oral language of students as informal assessment opportunities to inform their instruction. For example, students who use the same adjective repetitively may need to learn synonyms for a commonly used word to expand their vocabulary. A student who speaks in short, simple sentences may benefit by work in combining ideas into more complex structures. Nonstandard formation of tenses in a student's speech might trigger instruction that makes explicit the principle parts of an irregular verb. Providing multiple activities for students to take part in challenging uses of speech is key to student attainment of a language that will carry them into the world beyond school and home.

Teachers help students improve their oral language skills in many ways. They are themselves fluent and adept users of the spoken word and understand the content area of speech and debate. They demonstrate effective speaking in their day-to-day leadership of the class—for example, by rendering the oral retelling of a story with verve, changing the pitch and accent of their voices to bring dialogue alive. They help students directly with improving their speech by modeling effective listening skills that reflect accurately what students have just said and adding some new vocabulary while doing so. Or they may introduce a follow-up idea to stretch and elevate students' communicative competence. Teachers are sensitive to the unique challenges faced by students learning English as a new language and support them in their efforts to converse in English; for example, they might give visual and oral cues to help these students find the words to express their ideas. Teachers understand acceptable and responsible uses of language and discuss with their students how the responsible use of language can contribute to good communication, healthy relationships, future career success, and a safe school environment.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the importance of ongoing, meaningful feedback to shape listening, speaking, and viewing behaviors. They make expectations known to students in advance and may include students in creating rubrics or other tools to assess listening, speaking, and viewing skills. As with reading and writing, teachers use ongoing assessment to promote student development in listening, speaking, and viewing, thereby helping students become more versatile and accomplished communicators.

Reflections on Standard X:

Standard XI: Language Study

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers teach students to gain proficiency in language use and strengthen student sensitivity to appropriate uses of language.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that language study is the cornerstone of literacy. Teachers know that language is a creation of human ingenuity and a constantly evolving medium, not an eternally fixed, undeviating code. They recognize that each of us speaks what is, in effect, a personal dialect reflective of our own regional upbringing, ethnicity, occupation, age, and socioeconomic status. Teachers know that they have a responsibility to teach students the effectiveness of appropriate language use.

While recognizing and valuing the diversity of language forms in the United States, accomplished teachers understand the sociopolitical reality that some forms carry with them both greater influence and the potential for greater access to the economic, political, and academic advantages of society. They also understand that having a shared form of English facilitates both written and oral communication. Thus, teachers teach the conventions of Standard English and develop student awareness of how certain forms of language construct and maintain social inequities.

Teachers know the accepted rules of grammar, syntax, and usage; know how to teach them; and model them in their daily classroom conversations. They teach the structural patterns of English and how those patterns influence effectiveness in written and oral discourse. At the same time, they know that dialects—cognate forms of the language with their own distinct vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation—often signal membership in a group and are richly expressive communicative tools in their own right. In particular, they recognize that young adolescents whose language reflects a nondominant dialect frequently experience a sense of conflict when asked to speak and write according to the more broadly accepted language conventions because they may view this act as relinquishing part of their cultural identity. For these students especially, growth in different aspects of language is not uniform. Accordingly, teachers proceed sensitively in this area, respecting the integrity and value of their students' home language while modeling and teaching the conventions of English as a way of expanding each student's opportunity to participate fully in society.

For example, to overcome the inhibitions some students feel when using language that may seem alien to them, teachers may have them "produce" television news shows, allowing students to rehearse broadcasting in the dialect of Standard English. This role-playing creates a psychological buffer and eliminates the pejorative implication that the child's home language is somehow inadequate. To help students learn to assimilate texts written in Standard English or other forms of English with which they may be unfamiliar, such as Middle English, teachers might, for example, have students translate passages into language they themselves would use and then act out these paraphrased versions. Videotaping such productions would also give an opportunity to use technology as well as to encourage integrating language study with other disciplines.

Accomplished teachers recognize that there are different contexts for language—for example, sports talk, legal talk, and scientific talk—and give their students experiences that help them develop a sense of the

appropriateness of different kinds of language. Understanding different types of language and the context in which they would be appropriate or useful fosters interdisciplinary study, such as examining of a political speech, writing a science report, or writing a letter to request health information.

Accomplished teachers recognize and teach the appropriate contexts for formal and informal language use. Teachers may use real-life situations to demonstrate the appropriateness of language to various situations, such as the need for formal oral discourse when speaking to a group of strangers in contrast to the language spoken with friends, and the place of informal written discourse in an e-mail to a friend in contrast to the formal writing of an e-mail of inquiry in the business world. Teachers accept the informal spontaneity of oral language in the classroom, but also know the importance of helping students recognize the impact that informal oral discourse could have in formal situations. They skillfully use classroom discussions to guide students to a recognition of incorrect usage that may prevent them from attaining the acceptance they may desire or need in more formal speaking situations. While accepting that oral language is often spontaneous and that more attention to standard conventions may be given to written forms, teachers also help students recognize the use of informal English in notes, journals, and other tasks that also call for spontaneity. Teachers explain that written language can be edited before formal presentation to an audience, but because it is more often shared without the benefit of a speaker who can elaborate meaning, it may necessitate an increased level of clarity. Teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to examine and use both formal and informal language.

Teachers help students recognize that what is appropriate oral and written language varies according to social and cultural setting. They plan activities that help students assess the different situations they find themselves in and employ the English usage required by the situation. Teachers also discuss the social impact of language with students. For example, teachers help students see how words can hurt or cause harm to others, sometimes unintentionally. Teachers model for students the use of unbiased language (e.g., gender-neutral language) in their classrooms. Teachers help students understand that words can have powerful effects and need to be selected carefully.

Accomplished teachers know the importance of teaching how language works and its influence on effective communication. These teachers recognize and share the pleasure of language study with students through the exploration of language subtleties in diction, connotation, and syntax. Teachers understand that such language elements as puns, rhymes, oxymorons, and malapropisms appeal to the developing adolescent, enrich the study of language, and strengthen the understanding of the significance of language context. Students are encouraged to immerse themselves in wordplay and to incorporate new usages into their oral and written communication. Teachers help students understand the inferences and implied meanings of words used in different contexts. They show students the persuasive power of political language as well as the subtleties of advertising language. Teachers guide students to understand that words often carry regional or specialized meanings reflected when used in a specific context. Teachers also help students understand that the use of language carries with it an ethical responsibility. To demonstrate these aspects of language study, teachers provide students with effective examples of communication, such as speeches, advertisements, and editorials.

Students are encouraged to adopt a linguistically oriented approach and to investigate

language as an evolving human invention. For example, teachers might capitalize on the language diversity in a classroom to examine the words that constantly enter English from other languages, or they might use rapidly growing technology to provide all students with a first-hand view of how quickly new words and definitions are developing, demonstrating the essence of a living language.

Teachers also understand that existing and emerging technologies (e.g., videotape, CD-ROMs, software programs, speech synthesizers) are changing the way language is taught, and they use these resources when appropriate and helpful in meeting the diverse and specific educational goals of the class. Such applications can be useful for mediating physical or developmental disabilities in the learning of languages, and teachers avail themselves of these technologies accordingly. For example, speech synthesis offers students with visual impairments access to a wide variety of texts from the Internet and other electronic sources that might otherwise be inaccessible to them.

Teachers are aware of the special challenges that students who have come to English as a new language face in the language arts classroom, and they adjust their practice in many ways to make the curriculum available to such students. They accompany their explanations, whenever possible, with objects, pictures, or other visual cues. They carry out formal and informal comprehension checks to assess how well these students are following the concept under investigation. They use multicultural literature that promotes understanding of world cultures and of one's own culture. Accomplished English language arts teachers use the study of a new language by native English speakers as an opportunity to appreciate cultural learning and a means to understand the structure of English.

Teachers know that social competence in oral language is frequently acquired by students for whom English is a new language through their experiences in everyday life. Where these students more often need help, however, is in becoming effective users of comparatively abstract, academic, or formal language. Teachers know that these students may mask their confusion by repeating English responses without truly understanding what they are saying. Accordingly, teachers put the instructional emphasis on building comprehension among such students. Teachers know that acquiring a new language is often stressful and therefore take care to avoid embarrassing students. They make use of small groups in which students for whom English is a new language can talk with one another and gain the confidence to speak in larger group settings. They provide opportunities for students to converse in structured settings and activities, such as debates, as well as in informal settings and activities, such as cooperative groups or literature circles. Teachers encourage peer-to-peer and student-to-adult interactions to gain fluency and self-confidence in language use. The teachers' involvement in this learning context remains significant as they help students gain communicative competence.

Accomplished teachers understand the subtle nuances of the English language, how it is learned, how it works, and how it is used in all forms of communication. They appreciate the uniqueness of the many variations of the English language and share that appreciation with their students to ensure their success in an increasingly global society. They teach students about the responsibility and strength that can be earned by understanding and using the language appropriately.

Reflections on Standard XI:

Standard XII: Integrated Instruction

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers integrate learning and learning activities within the English language arts classroom and across the disciplines.

Integrated instruction is a hallmark of accomplished teachers and encompasses two related concepts. The first is the well-established notion that the language processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing are mutually reinforcing. The second is that the content of English language arts should directly connect students with broad themes, ideas, and issues within texts and across disciplines.

Accomplished teachers recognize the interdependent nature of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. For example, while students learn to write well primarily by writing, this skill is also supported and fostered by reading, viewing, speaking, and listening. Student proficiency in writing increases when students read good models of writing or speak with one another in small groups about what they intend to write or how successfully they have realized their intentions. Students can listen carefully to the sounds and inflections of real conversation before trying to write dialogue. Becoming skilled in interpreting visual forms of communication may increase their skill with literary symbolism or with the writing of descriptive detail. Students who are committed to becoming good writers also become more attentive, capable readers, interested not only in what a favorite author is saying but also in how the author manages to achieve a desired effect.

Although English language arts teachers know that growth in different aspects of language is not uniform, especially for students for whom English is a new language, they also know that nurturing growth in any language process promotes growth in all the others. They intentionally design learning activities that capitalize on this mutually reinforcing tendency of skill acquisition. For example, they regularly ask students to respond to intellectual challenges that require them to compose and interpret by using all five language processes.

Teachers help students understand that the language competencies they are acquiring are applicable outside the English language arts classroom. For example, teachers may organize instruction around an inquiry-based approach based on real-world concerns. Reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing processes can be used across disciplines to enhance learning. Conversely, content knowledge from other disciplines can be incorporated into the English language arts classroom. English language arts teachers might show how an understanding of the structure of sentences can help students solve word problems in mathematics or express their ideas about a fact learned in science. For example, after learning in science that plastic does not decompose easily, students might object to their school's purchase of plastic cups. Teachers may capitalize on this passion by helping students prepare a persuasive multimedia presentation by using data gathered from science experiments, mathematical cost analyses, charts, graphs, and other research information to make a case against certain uses of plastic and to propose reasonable alternatives.

The practice of accomplished teachers is also integrated in the sense that it is broad-gauged—organized around large, compelling themes and ideas—rather than separated into the mastery of isolated subskills. Broad organizing themes in language arts classes may be topical ("homelessness," "lifeboat earth"), timeless ("first love," "courage and cowardice"), or both ("the faces of prejudice"), but they have the effect of providing intellectual continuity, real-world relevance, and fertile ground for comparisons. English language arts teachers know that cross-disciplinary instruction occurs in many forms. For example, the English language arts teacher may connect a novel to the art, history, or scientific inventions of the time period. English language arts teachers might also work in partnership with one or more teachers of other disciplines to build units of study around a common theme. In some cases, teachers might teach two or more disciplines within one classroom, incorporating English language arts themes, competencies, and curriculum throughout those disciplines. Research projects also offer a logical connection between other disciplines and English language arts. Teachers can use various disciplines to engage students in learning and following the steps necessary for accurate research and the production of a research paper or project.

An additional benefit of interdisciplinary, integrated instruction is that such strategies help ensure all students equitable access to the curriculum by providing multiple paths to learning. Accomplished teachers seek such opportunities to enrich their instruction and the learning experiences of their students. Accomplished teachers also make positive contributions to the curriculum of their colleagues by sharing knowledge and resources for the purposes of designing instruction. (See Standard XV—*Professional Community.*)

Accomplished teachers use available technology to support curricular goals in all types of integrated instruction. Although technology includes everything from paper and pencil to emerging digital technologies, accomplished teachers use whatever technology is available to strengthen students' abilities to read, write, speak, listen, and view. Technologies facilitate the integration and underscore the interdependence of these language processes, and they also facilitate the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. For example, to enrich the study of a novel set in a particular place and time period, students could access newspaper articles, songs, photographs, artwork, and maps from the period through the Internet or through more traditional print, visual, or auditory material. They could also make use of various technologies to share their information and ideas with others.

Through integrated instruction accomplished English language arts teachers are able to clearly reinforce the importance of clear communication skills to students and colleagues. They can work with their colleagues to show students that knowledge is not restricted to isolated classrooms, and that collaboration is a valuable learning tool.

Reflections on Standard XII:

Standard XIII: Assessment

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers use a range of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor and evaluate student progress, encourage student self-assessment, plan instruction, and report to various audiences.

Assessment—the process of taking stock of the breadth and depth of students' literacy skills and knowledge—is an ongoing element of the accomplished English language arts teacher's routine and serves a series of essential purposes. Good assessment practices have the power to support deep student learning, just as ill-designed or haphazard ones can undermine instruction. Accomplished teachers have command of a wide range of assessment methods and strategies that align with the central goals of the language arts curriculum. These teachers interpret and use assessment results to shape their instruction.

For accomplished teachers, assessment is not only the administration of a summative test at the end of a unit; it is a constant monitoring of student progress that both precedes instruction (to establish a baseline) and accompanies instruction (to keep track of what is working). Assessment findings help shape instructional planning for individual students, small groups, and the entire class. As a result of assessments, teachers provide students with constructive feedback regarding both the processes and the products of their meaning-making efforts. The assessments of accomplished teachers direct the attention of students to salient features of their language performances and prompt students to reflect more deeply on how these could be improved. Through assessments, accomplished teachers provide students with a positive and supportive environment in which students come to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and are motivated to improve. Accomplished teachers also use assessment to gauge the success of their own instructional methods on student progress. These teachers make mid-course adjustments and refinements to enhance student learning, recognizing, for example, when something needs to be retaught or when the pace is too fast or too slow for students. Accomplished teachers know that students should learn, benefit, and grow from the process of assessment.

Teachers know that developing their students' abilities to assess their own progress in language use is key to fostering their growth as independent learners. Toward that end, they engage students in self-assessment activities. Accomplished teachers provide models, criteria, benchmarks, rubrics, and feedback so that the students can make accurate and realistic judgments about the quality of their own performance. They also involve students in setting their own goals and devising ways to measure their own progress. When students assess their own performance, teachers may use these evaluations as a source of information in constructing a complete picture of student progress.

In some states, teachers are accountable for student performance on districtwide or statewide standardized tests; these assessments may have important consequences for students as well. Accomplished teachers recognize their responsibility with these assessments and meet their responsibility in creative and innovative ways. They help students succeed on these standardized tests and make sure that preparations for these external assessments provide opportunities for significant learning for students. Teachers integrate test preparation with their regular instruction and learning goals. Accomplished teachers know how to interpret test results, and whenever possible, they use the results from district and state tests as one indicator of student

language development. Teachers know that the assessment of student learning takes many forms; they do not make judgments about students on the basis of any single assessment, but draw on data from multiple measures.

Accomplished teachers design, select, and use assessments that are aligned with goals, standards, curricula, and instruction and that match the needs of the individual student, class, school, and district. Teachers have command of a broad range of classroom assessment methodologies that generate a variety of data that can aid them in making important pedagogical decisions. Teachers match the format of the assessment of student work to their instructional goals, and they understand the context of each assessment in the larger framework of the classroom. They make their assessments transparent to students so that there are no secrets about an assessment or its use. They discuss assessment tools in advance with their students and help students understand the evaluative criteria used on rubrics and other scales. Teachers also work to improve the quality of assessments in their schools, districts, and states, where possible. For example, if their students are involved in a schoolwide writing assessment, teachers might help evaluate and refine the prompts and the accompanying rubrics.

Assessments may take such forms as the systematic monitoring of student participation during class discussions or other classroom work and the review of collections of individual student writings over time. Teachers also may compile anecdotal notes on student performances during oral presentations or group reports; conduct one-on-one interviews; record students on audiotapes; assign essays and projects; and administer paper-and-pencil examinations, both on a small and a large scale. Teachers know that portfolios can be an effective source for gauging student literacy growth. Teachers recognize that portfolios include a range of work samples that provide insight into students' skills, approaches to assignments, preparedness, organization, comprehension, and development.

Accomplished teachers work to ensure that their assessments are appropriate for all students. They evaluate both their own assessments and ready-made tests for possible bias and try to promote bias-free tests, fair to all groups. They make appropriate adjustments to their assessments for students with disabilities and students learning English as a new language. For example, a scribe may support a student with a disability that impedes fine motor skills by recording verbal responses verbatim. A student learning English as a new language may receive, where appropriate, an accommodation of additional time or a modified assessment that matches more closely the student's current level of proficiency. In all cases, assessments are designed to advance learning. (See Standard V—*Equity, Fairness, and Diversity*.)

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers prepare reports of their evaluations that clearly communicate to parents, other teachers, and administrators the kind and quality of progress that students are making. Teachers use available communications technologies to do so. These teachers provide parents with meaningful feedback on how their children are faring in the development of language processes; this feedback includes periodic comparisons with clearly defined performance standards. In this way, teachers help cement family support for the language arts program. Teachers also communicate assessment results with their colleagues, when feasible, to provide a composite picture of their students' academic performance. Accomplished teachers strive to ensure that students, families, and the entire school benefit from sound assessment practices.

Reflections on Standard XIII:

Supporting Student Learning through Long-Range Initiatives

The last three standards describe other important decisions, actions, activities, and frames of mind that support and contribute to the practice of accomplished teachers. These include the ways these teachers reflect on their own professionalism, as well as the way they work with others, including parents and colleagues, to create intellectually lively and spirited classrooms that support their learning goals.

Standard XIV: Self-Reflection

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers constantly analyze and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their teaching.

The depth of experience and knowledge necessary to attain accomplishment in teaching comes from years of working with students and addressing their specific needs while regularly reflecting on these activities. Accomplished teachers recognize that language arts teaching is an evolving field, one in which teachers must employ their professional judgment to discern what constitutes sound practice in coping with tough challenges that do not lend themselves to simple solutions. They recognize that the demands of their craft change over time—indeed, they change with each class and each student. They view each year as another opportunity to improve the quality of their own teaching practice and to enhance their profession. They are lifelong learners, constantly seeking to improve their professional vision and the conduct of their classroom.

Teachers avail themselves of many resources in analyzing the appropriateness and quality of their teaching. They seek out and make use of feedback from students, colleagues, administrators, and parents. Other teachers, in particular, are a rich source of perspective and insight. (See Standard XV—*Professional Community*.) Teachers also stay abreast of significant research findings in their field. They are familiar with district, state, and national standards and curriculum guides and professional publications. They consistently take advantage of professional development opportunities that provide meaningful self-reflection, such as classroom-based research, teacher study groups, and peer assessments.

Most of all, teachers plumb their own experience, regularly reflecting on their daily triumphs and setbacks in the classroom and how they might be repeated or avoided. Through this habit of introspection, teachers draw on their classroom experiences, knowledge of theory, and contemporary research to solve problems and constantly reinvigorate their practice. Teachers also evaluate their own personal strengths and weaknesses and are open to change. They work constantly to broaden their perspective and are aware of how their particular cultural background, values, biases, and experiences might limit or promote their teaching effectiveness with specific groups of students.

Teachers have a vision for their students, the dynamics of their classroom, their own teaching role, and the future of the profession. They understand and have reasoned opinions on the major controversies in the field. They can talk persuasively about why they make the pedagogical decisions they do based on their professional knowledge and teaching experiences, whether or not they can trace the genealogy of their ideas to their most famous proponents.

Teachers know that the journey to becoming an expert is exhilarating, uneven, and lengthy. In the end, however, not only knowledge, but something rarer and more dearly won, distinguishes the accomplished practitioner. Through their habit of self-reflection and insistence on high expectations for themselves and their students, accomplished teachers cultivate the attribute of refined professional judgment. They become alert to the teachable moment. As a result of developing a daily habit of reflection, they are able to think quickly on their feet and are consistently able to take maximum advantage of the unpredictable opportunities that present themselves in the course of the school day. They are, in short, artists of their profession.

Reflections on Standard XIV:

Standard XV: Professional Community

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers contribute to the improvement of instructional programs, advancement of knowledge, and practice of colleagues.

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers are involved members of their learning communities. They contribute to the quality of practice of their peers and to the overall instructional program of the school. They also benefit from collaboration with colleagues, university faculty, and other members of the community. Not all teachers have the option to participate in all the ways suggested below. In many cases, teachers are limited by circumstances beyond their control. Within those constraints, however, accomplished teachers find ways to contribute to and gain from the larger learning community—at the school site and beyond.

Teachers strengthen the school as a learning community in many possible ways. They are team players who contribute to the academic life of the school through their commitment to the well-being of the institution, whether they manifest this commitment by analyzing and developing curriculum for their department, by working with a colleague on a lesson, or by forming partnerships with administrators. They collaborate with specialists so that students who need custom-tailored instruction are properly identified and receive a coordinated program suited to their requirements. They address and participate in the solution of schoolwide problems and policy issues. They help promote public understanding of the aims and achievements of the school. They act as resources for colleagues in other disciplines in promoting reading and writing across the curriculum, and they collaborate in the planning of integrated curricula.

Accomplished teachers know that providing a safe and accepting social environment is essential to advancing the knowledge of all students in their school. English language arts teachers are aware of their special position as teachers of communication and how this position can affect the climate of the entire school as well as of their classrooms. They model, teach, and demand appropriate forms of communication among all members of their school community. Teachers serve as a comforting adult presence to all students. They help ease the transition for students from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school by working with colleagues at the various levels. As students react to text and express their thoughts and feelings in varied formats, language arts teachers are often the first adults who have the opportunity to offer help and guidance and to alert other adults to possible problems. Teachers are adept listeners and observers of human behavior who can distinguish between the typical angst of the adolescent and deeper, more troubling concerns. Accomplished teachers assume a leadership role among their colleagues, alerting them to problems and working with them to provide solutions.

Accomplished teachers advance the knowledge and practice of colleagues and learn from other teachers as well. They observe and coach novices and other teachers. They cooperate with postsecondary educational institutions to prepare of new teachers for the field. They propose, design, and carry out staff development opportunities in English language arts. They share successful practices with colleagues, make presentations at workshops, or publish in professional journals. They make a positive contribution to professional organizations.

They serve on local, state, or national education task forces. In general, accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers take a leadership role within the English language arts profession, sharing their accumulated knowledge and working to strengthen the quality of teachers' practice.

English language arts teachers demonstrate their position as members of the professional community by working with others to improve instructional programs, the overall school environment, and the practice of themselves and of their colleagues. They demonstrate the importance of collaboration to provide the best possible education for their students.

Reflections on Standard XV:

Standard XVI: Family Outreach

Accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers work with families to serve the best interests of their children.

Accomplished teachers value and respect the role of families as their children's first teachers and acknowledge the high aspirations that families have for their children and schooling. Teachers know that the expectations of parents and other adult caregivers have a huge impact on the learning success of children. Consequently, they take steps to solicit parental participation in the language arts program. They establish two-way communication with parents[4] early in the school year. They seek information from parents about their children's strengths, interests, preferences, dispositions, health history, learning goals, and home life. They provide information about the language arts program and outline steps parents can take to support their children's language development. For example, teachers may suggest that parents encourage and help their children to keep a journal, write stories, and correspond with friends and relatives; they might also suggest that parents help children set and attain independent reading goals; or they might suggest appropriate ways for parents to interact with students about homework. Teachers may also remind parents to listen to and talk with their children regularly about both academic and nonacademic matters.

Teachers see parents as allies. They communicate regularly with families about children's specific needs and progress in language arts and respond thoughtfully to the families' concerns. Teachers recognize that parents have their own school history and convictions about education that must be taken into account in fostering a positive home-school climate. For example, adults whose education experience was mainly negative may be reluctant to become involved in their child's formal learning. In contrast, some concerned parents may insist that their children be instructed in English language arts in the same way they remember having been taught. In either case, accomplished teachers know how to open—and keep open—lines of communication. They know when it is best to take the initiative in inviting participation and how to do so in a nonthreatening manner. They make special efforts to communicate productively with the parents of students for whom English is a new language. For example, they may enlist the help of colleagues who can write in other languages to translate informal progress reports sent home to parents who are not fluent speakers of English.

Such teachers also recognize that some parents have views of the purposes of schooling or of English language arts instruction that may be in conflict with their own. They are respectful of such parental perspectives, and when parents seek a change in instructional approach, accomplished teachers enter the discussion with the expectation that a workable solution can be reached. They provide parents with clear explanations for their instructional strategies, keeping the conversation focused on what parents care about—the learning progress of their children. To retain the focus on student progress, accomplished teachers keep young adolescents in the feedback loop when interacting with their parents. They help wean parents away from an overreliance on test scores and grades by providing them with concrete examples of

4. The word "parents" is used in this document to refer to the people who are the primary caregivers and guardians of children.

what their children and the children's peers can actually do in English language arts. (See Standard XIII—*Assessment*.) Often, they design assignments with an eye toward involving the whole family in discussions of the learning activity, and they invite caregiving adults into the classroom as observers, guest speakers, or volunteers. They help parents understand the school's role in helping children become knowledgeable, responsible, literate, and articulate young men and women who can make important contributions to our democratic society.

Reflections on Standard XVI:

Epilogue

The 16 standards in this document represent a professional consensus on the characteristics of accomplished English language arts practice and provide a profile of the accomplished Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teacher. Although the standards are challenging, they are upheld every day by teachers like the ones described in these pages, who inspire and instruct the nation's youth and lead their profession. By publishing this document and offering National Board Certification to English language arts educators, NBPTS aims to affirm the practice of the many teachers who meet these standards and challenge others to strive to meet them. Moreover, NBPTS hopes to bring increased attention to the professionalism and expertise of accomplished English language arts educators and in so doing, pave the way for greater professional respect and opportunity for these essential members of the teaching community.

In addition to being a stimulus for self-reflection on the part of teachers at all levels of performance, *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards* is intended to be a catalyst for discussion among administrators, staff developers, and others in the education community about accomplished practice in this field. If these standards advance the conversation about accomplished teaching, they will provide an important step toward the NBPTS goal of improving student learning in our nation's schools.

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Acknowledgments

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards, Second Edition,* reflects more than a decade of dialogue about accomplished teaching in English language arts. These standards derive their power from an amazing degree of collaboration and consensus. Through the expertise and input of two standards committees, convened nine years apart; numerous reviews by a 63-member board of directors; and two periods of public comment by educators, policymakers, parents, and the like; as well as through the intense study of candidates for National Board Certification who have immersed themselves in the first edition; these second-edition standards emerge as a living testament to what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards*, *Second Edition,* represents the best thinking by teachers and for teachers about advanced teaching practice in the field.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is deeply grateful to all of those who contributed their time, wisdom, and professional vision to *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards, Second Edition*. Any thank-you must begin with the pioneers in 1991, who spent four years debating, reflecting, and articulating the multiple facets of accomplished teaching so that they could help advance the field and provide a rigorous and sound basis for national certification of teachers. In particular, the National Board would like to show its appreciation to Chair Linda Rief, who so skillfully led the effort to weave the National Board's Five Core Propositions into field-specific standards of teaching excellence.

Any field grows, shifts, and evolves over time. Standards, too, must remain dynamic and therefore are subject to revision. In January 2000, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards convened a second Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards Committee. This committee was charged with achieving both continuity and change, using the first edition of the standards as the foundation for their work, but modifying the standards to reflect best practice of the early twenty-first century. The Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards Committee exemplified the collegiality, expertise, and dedication to the improvement of student learning that are hallmarks of accomplished teachers. Special thanks go to Chair Sandy Robertson; Vice Chair Velvet McReynolds, NBCT; and Facilitator Athene Bell, NBCT, for their invaluable leadership in making the second edition a reality.

The Standards and Professional Development Working Group of the board of directors is also an important collaborator in the creation of the second-edition standards. The working group consists of a diverse group of educators who reviewed *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards, Second Edition,* at various points in its development, made suggestions about how it could be strengthened, and recommended to the full board the adoption of the standards. Representing the board of directors as a liaison to the Early Adolescence/English Language Arts Standards Committee was Marian Galbraith, whose extensive knowledge of the field made her a treasured advisor.

Hundreds of individuals not directly associated with the National Board aided in the development of these standards. Early Adolescence/English Language Arts teachers and scholars, state and local officials, and representatives of disciplinary organizations—to name just a few—reviewed a draft of the standards document when the standards were disseminated nationwide during a public comment period.

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In presenting these standards for accomplished teaching, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards recognizes that this publication would not have been possible without the considerable contributions of individuals and institutions too numerous to mention. On behalf of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, I extend my thanks to all of them.

Katherine S. Woodward
Director, Certification Standards

The core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

1) *Teachers are committed to students and their learning.*

2) *Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.*

3) *Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.*

4) *Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.*

5) *Teachers are members of learning communities.*

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