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# Teaching English language learner students: professional standards in elementary education in Central Region states

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# Teaching English language learner students: professional standards in elementary education in Central Region states

**February 2012**

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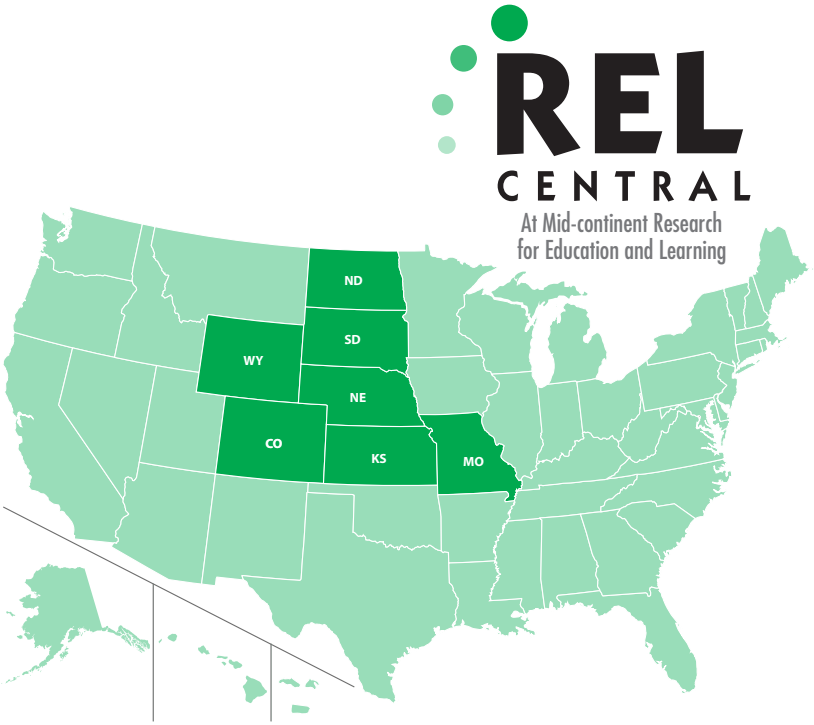


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*Summary*

REL 2012–No. 122

# Teaching English language learner students: professional standards in elementary education in Central Region states

**This report on professional teaching standards in the Central Region examines what K–8 general education teachers are expected to know and be able to do in order to teach English language learner students. It reviews the standards for coverage of six topics that the research literature suggests are important for improving student achievement.**

Nationally, more English language learner (ELL) students are enrolled in schools than ever before. As Lucas and Grinberg note, "the diversity of English language abilities among students in mainstream classes has increased" (2008, p. 608), which can challenge teachers in these classrooms. Because it can take five to seven years for ELL students to become proficient enough in English to succeed academically (Hakuta, Butler, and Witt 2000), the quality of both mainstream teachers and certified English as a second language teachers is important for student success (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 recognizes the importance of teachers to student success and calls on states to develop and implement teacher evaluation systems that recognize, encourage, and reward teaching excellence and that inform professional development and guidance for teachers and principals to improve student learning (U.S. Department of Education 2010).

The number of ELL students in Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Central Region schools is increasing, too. Between 2000 and 2008, it increased 66.6 percent in North Dakota, 62.5 percent in Kansas, 56.6 percent in Missouri, 52.2 percent in Nebraska, 28.7 percent in Colorado, 8.8 percent in South Dakota, and 5.3 percent in Wyoming (U.S. Department of Education 2007/08). Education leaders concerned about workforce development and quality in Central Region states need to know how well their professional standards are addressing the knowledge and skills teachers should have for teaching ELL students.

To accommodate these students' learning needs in mainstream classrooms, teachers must know how and when to modify instruction and build on their students' existing knowledge (Gersten et al. 2005). Teaching standards, which specify what teachers should know and be able to do, provide a common set of professional expectations for teacher preparation programs, licensure, professional development outcomes, and job performance (Blanton, Sindelar, and Correa 2006; Council of Chief State School Officers 2010; Danielson

2008; North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission n.d.).

This report builds on a recent REL West study of professional standards for K–12 teachers (White, Makkonen, and Stewart 2010). Responding to the requests of chief state school officers and district superintendents in the seven Central Region states, the current report examines the knowledge and skills that K–8 teachers in these states are expected to have in order to improve the academic outcomes of ELL students across six topics: recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds, differentiating instruction, selecting materials or curricula, knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support, communicating with students and families, and assessing students' language status and development.

The following research question guides this study:

- To what extent do professional teaching standards in the Central Region include knowledge and skills that research has identified as important for K–8 general education teachers to teach ELL students?

Key findings include:

- All seven Central Region states include knowledge and skills for teaching ELL students in their teaching standards, referencing at least two topics: differentiating instruction to accommodate the learning needs of ELL students and communicating with students and families for whom English is not their native language.

- Five states (Kansas, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming) reference recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds; four states (Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming) reference knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.

- No states reference selecting materials or curricula to accommodate the learning needs of ELL students.

- The number of ELL-related topics in each state's standards ranges from two to five. Colorado and Nebraska reference two (differentiating instruction and communicating with students and families). Missouri references one additional topic (recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds), while North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming reference two additional topics (recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds and knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support). Finally, Kansas references one additional topic (assessing students' language status and development), for a total of five topics.

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**This report on professional teaching standards in the Central Region examines what K–8 general education teachers are expected to know and be able to do in order to teach English language learner students. It reviews the standards for coverage of six topics that the research literature suggests are important for improving student achievement.**

## WHY THIS STUDY?

Nationally, more English language learner (ELL) students are enrolled in schools than ever before. As Lucas and Grinberg note, "the diversity of English language abilities among students in mainstream classes has increased" (2008, p. 608), which can challenge teachers in mainstream classrooms. Because it can take five to seven years for ELL students to become proficient enough in English to succeed academically (Hakuta, Butler, and Witt 2000), the quality of both mainstream teachers and certified English as a second language teachers is important for student success (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 recognizes the importance of teachers to student success and calls on states to develop and implement teacher evaluation systems that recognize, encourage, and reward teaching excellence and that inform professional development and guidance for teachers and principals to improve student learning (U.S. Department of Education 2010).

The number of ELL students in Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Central Region schools is increasing, too. Between 2000 and 2008, it increased 66.6 percent in North Dakota, 62.5 percent in Kansas, 56.6 percent in Missouri, 52.2 percent in Nebraska, 28.7 percent in Colorado, 8.8 percent in South Dakota, and 5.3 percent in Wyoming (U.S. Department of Education 2007/08). Education leaders concerned about workforce development and quality in the Central Region states need to know how well their professional standards are addressing the knowledge and skills teachers should have for teaching ELL students.

To accommodate these students' learning needs in mainstream classrooms, Central Region teachers must know how and when to modify instruction and build on their students' prior knowledge (Gersten et al. 2005). This study, responding to the requests of chief state school officers and district superintendents in the Central Region states, examines the knowledge and skills that K–8 teachers

in these states are expected to have in order to improve the academic outcomes of ELL students.[1]

Teaching standards specify required knowledge and skills. They provide a common set of professional expectations for teacher preparation programs, licensure, professional development outcomes, and job performance (Blanton, Sindelar, and Correa 2006; Council of Chief State School Officers 2010; Danielson 2008; North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission n.d.).

This report builds on a recent REL West study of professional standards for K–12 teachers (White, Makkonen, and Stewart 2010; box 1). In an analysis of professional standards in six states, the REL West study identified six ELL topics. To clarify topic boundaries and definitions, REL Central researchers compared the six REL West topics with research on effective practices for ELL students (Gersten et al. 2007; Saunders and Goldenberg 2010) and standards for mainstream teachers suggested by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. The six topics for the current study include: recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds, differentiating instruction, selecting materials or curricula, knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support, communicating with students and families, and assessing students' language status and development. (See appendix A for a description of the topics and box 2 and appendix B for data sources and study methodology.)

The current study focuses on K–8 teachers because ELL students are concentrated primarily in the lower grades. For example, in Nebraska, 2,174 ELL students participated in the 2009/10 state reading assessment. That number drops an average of approximately 16 percentage points from grade to grade (to approximately 1,900 in grade 4, 1,500 in grade 5, 1,300 in grade 6, 1,000 in grade 7, and 900 in grade 8); the number of total students, however, decreases just 1–2 percentage points from grade to grade (Nebraska Department of Education 2010a). In other states with high populations of ELL students, such as Arizona, more elementary schools than middle and high schools have student populations where more than half of students are ELL students (Haas and Huang 2010).

Additionally, consistent data on teaching standards were available for the K–8 level. Though teacher evaluation systems were still evolving in the seven REL Central Region states, teacher evaluation standards for all teachers (K–12) have

BOX 1

**The 2010 content analysis of teaching standards by Regional Educational Laboratory West**

White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010) analyzed content related to instruction of English language learner (ELL) students in six states (California, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas), as well as studied K–12 teaching standards generally. Using key terms including "English language learner," "language acquisition," and "linguistic diversity," the study team searched each state's standards and categorized statements relevant to teaching ELL students into one of six topics:

- Recognizing and supporting diversity.
- Differentiating instruction.
- Selecting materials or curricula.
- Knowing second language acquisition and other learning theory and strategies.
- Communicating with students and families.
- Assessing students' language status and development.

The most common topics included in the teaching standards were recognizing and supporting diversity (five states, all but Texas) and differentiating instruction (five states, all but Illinois). The next most common topics were knowing second language acquisition and other learning theory and strategies (Florida, Illinois, and Texas) and assessing students' language status and development (California, Florida, and Illinois). The least common topics were selecting materials or curricula (California and Florida) and communicating with students and families (Florida and North Carolina).

been drafted or adopted in three states: Colorado, Kansas, and Missouri. In Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, comparable information was available on the knowledge and skills required for certification and endorsement as an elementary education teacher (K–6 in Nebraska and Wyoming and K–8 in North Dakota and South Dakota). Both teacher evaluation standards and endorsement and certification standards identify the knowledge and skills that are required of teachers and are thus important for teacher quality.

The following research question guides this study:

- To what extent do professional teaching standards in the Central Region include knowledge and skills that research has identified as important for K–8 general education teachers to teach ELL students?

BOX 2

## Data and methodology

For this content analysis of professional teaching standards for K–8 general education teachers in the REL Central Region states, source documents were obtained, and state officials verified them as appropriate. Content was reviewed and categorized into an adaptation of six topics used in a previous analysis of state teaching standards (White, Makkonen, and Stewart 2010): recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds, differentiating instruction, selecting materials or curricula, knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support, communicating with students and families, and assessing students' language status and development.

*Data sources.* The primary data source documents, obtained from the education agency website of each state, identified the knowledge and skills required for elementary education teachers in the Central Region (see table B1 in appendix B).

*Data preparation.* To prepare the content for analysis, the principal investigator read the source documents for each state and identified the sections relevant for the content analysis. The content represented all relevant teaching standards (or knowledge and skills) required for endorsement to teach general education in grades K–8 and did not overlap (see table B1 in appendix B).[1] Once the relevant sections were identified, sequential identification numbers were applied to the reference statements. The unit of analysis was a reference statement comprising at least one complete sentence.

*Data coding.* The study team developed a preliminary coding protocol for relevant reference statements. The first step was to search the content for key terms used by White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010; see appendix B). The second step was to extract the reference statements, record them, and categorize them into one or more of six English language learner (ELL) topics. When reference statements included two actions (for example, understand and adapt), they were categorized in two categories. The most specific reference statements (for example, indicators, sample evidence) were categorized by topic but extracted and preserved in the context of the more general content, such as the standard (Instruction). Indirect references to ELL students (for example, "all students") or references to cultural diversity were not included. And though recognition of cultural diversity is important in teaching, it was not the focus of this analysis. Reference statements solely about cultural diversity were excluded; reference statements about both diversity in language background and cultural diversity were included.

To familiarize the study team with the coding process, the source documents for one state were used in a training exercise led by the principal investigator and two other members of the study team: a standards content analyst and an expert in teaching ELL students. For the training, the study team adhered to the preliminary protocol and then participated in a whole-group discussion about each reference statement. Reference statements were identified and categorized according to consensus reached by the three team members. The team refined the definitions of and distinctions between each topic

BOX 2 (CONTINUED)

**Data and methodology**

identified in White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010), altering the names of two topics.[2] The six topics were:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* Specialized knowledge related to respecting and understanding first languages and to how home language and literacy intersects with classroom participation.
- *Differentiating instruction.* The selection, adaptation, and use of different instructional strategies to accommodate the needs of ELL students. Examples of strategies for differentiating instruction included making content comprehensible, providing primary language assistance, and arranging small groups or pairs for instruction and cooperative learning.
- *Selecting materials or curricula.* Selecting, planning, and using materials and resources that make instruction and content as understandable as possible.
- *Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.* Understanding second language acquisition, bilingualism, language structure, and other related theories on the role of first and second language development in learning.
- *Communicating with students and families.* Knowledge and skills related to reaching out to, communicating with, and including ELL students and their families in academic learning.
- *Assessing students' language status and development.* Assessment skills related to recognizing students' language status and development to identify needs and adaptations to accommodate those needs, including removal of language barriers in both instruction and assessment.

After the study team members were trained and topic definitions refined, the coding process began. First, the principal investigator assigned pairs of researchers from a team of six to each state. Next, each member of the assigned pairs independently located and categorized reference statements into one or more topics. The researchers then entered the reference statements, recorded their categories, compared results, and identified discrepancies. Consensus on the discrepancies was sought through discussion; if no consensus was reached, a third researcher reviewed the discrepancy and together, the three researchers reached a decision. Each state official reviewed the location and coding of relevant reference statements for accuracy and completeness.

For each state, a profile of reference statements was created, showing the content identified for each topic (appendix C). Each profile summarized the state's source documents.

*Data analysis.* For each state, a matrix was created for logging references by topic. The number of topics was tallied. Gaps, patterns of coverage, and commonalities and differences among the standards were then identified.

*Notes*

1. Kansas was an exception. The Kansas State Department of Education was revising all licensure standards during data preparation for this study. To represent the state's latest thinking, in addition to the existing Regulations and Standards document, researchers included the draft standards as specified in the Kansas Evaluation Project Standards Table for Teachers (Kansas State Department of Education 2010).
2. Recognizing and supporting diversity became recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds; knowing second language acquisition and other learning theory and strategies became knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.

## STUDY FINDINGS

All seven states in the Central Region include in their teaching standards at least two of the six topics for teaching ELL students (table 1). And all seven states require that general elementary education teachers be able to differentiate instruction for ELL students and to communicate with students and families whose first language is not English.

TABLE 1
**English language learner topics referenced in state teaching standards**

| Topic | Colorado | Kansas | Missouri | Nebraska | North Dakota | South Dakota | Wyoming | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds | | ✔[a] | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 5 |
| Differentiating instruction | ✔ | ✔[a] | ✔ | ✔[d] | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 7 |
| Selecting materials or curricula | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support | | ✔[b] | | | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 4 |
| Communicating with students and families | ✔ | ✔[b] | ✔ | ✔[e] | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 7 |
| Assessing students' language status and development | | ✔[c] | | | | | | 1 |
| Total | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | |

a. Referenced in both the current and draft Kansas standards document.

b. Referenced in the current Kansas standards document only.

c. Referenced in the draft Kansas standards document only.

d. Referenced in Nebraska Rule 20 (approval of teacher education programs) only.

e. Referenced in Nebraska Rule 24 (certification endorsements: elementary) only.

*Source:* Authors' analysis of study records.

The study team's review of state standards indicates that each Central Region state considers it important for teachers to adapt their practices to meet the education needs of ELL students. The number of ELL topics referenced in each state's teaching standards ranged from two to five. Colorado and Nebraska referenced two topics, Missouri referenced three, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming referenced four,[2] and Kansas referenced five topics. (See appendix C for profiles of the states' reference statements.)

As White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010) found in the West Region states, differentiating instruction was one of the most commonly included topics. However, the relevant reference statements about differentiating instruction tended to be general. The level of detail provided in the standards for general education teachers—as suggested by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and research on the effectiveness of strategies for differentiating instruction—was not provided in the teaching standards for the Central Region states.[3]

## Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds

Five states (Kansas, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming) include recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds among their standards. These states name language as one of several influences on learning. In the North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming standards for K–6/8 teachers, candidates must be able to identify and understand "how elementary students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values" (Association for Childhood Education International 2007, p. 16). Kansas and Missouri have the same requirement in their standards but for teachers across all grades (not just for elementary school teachers). In Missouri, the language refers also to applying the understanding of the influence of language to modifying instruction (see the discussion of the differentiating instruction topic below).

### Differentiating instruction

All seven states include among their standards differentiating instruction to meet the needs of ELL students. For establishing learning environments, Colorado requires teachers to be able to "collaborate with a range of support specialists to develop and use appropriate strategies and resources to adapt to the learning needs of various groups of students, including those with special needs, ELL students, and gifted and talented learners" (Colorado State Council for Educator Effectiveness 2011, p. 4). In Kansas, teachers are expected to be able to "create a learning environment that reflects respect and adaptations for children's culture, home languages, individual abilities and disabilities, family contexts, and communities" (Kansas State Department of Education 2009, p. 10). Missouri standards require that teachers modify instruction to reflect understanding of how language influences learning (Missouri Advisory Council of Certification of Educators 2011). Nebraska standards consider the ability to "adapt instruction or services appropriately for all students, including linguistically and culturally diverse students and students with exceptionalities" important for graduates of teacher preparation programs (Nebraska Department of Education 2007).

In North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, the elementary education teaching standards include a statement relevant to both this topic (differentiating instruction) and the knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support topic, requiring that teachers use "their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and results in their becoming competent, effective users of language" (Association for Childhood Education International 2007, p. 5).

**All seven states include among their standards differentiating instruction to meet the needs of English language learner students**

### Selecting materials or curricula

No state's standards referenced selecting materials or curricula to accommodate the learning needs of ELL students. Knowledge and skills for adapting to meet the needs of ELL students were categorized under the topics of differentiating instruction or knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.

### Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support

Four states (Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming) include knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support among their teaching standards, focusing on the interplay between students' second language acquisition and learning. That is, the states' reference statements combine understanding second language acquisition with actions that use this understanding to support learning. For example, Kansas requires that teachers "know about the process of second language acquisition and about strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English" (Kansas State Department of Education 2009, p. 59) and that teachers demonstrate "an understanding of the phonemic, morphemic, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic systems of language and their relation to the reading and writing process" (Kansas State Department of Education 2009, p. 73).

In North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, teachers are required to "use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and results in their becoming competent, effective users of language" (Association for Childhood Education International 2007, p. 5).

### Communicating with students and families

All seven states include communicating with students and families among their standards,

focusing on communicating effectively in a variety of ways, even when language is a barrier or when a student's or parent's first language is not English. Colorado, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming focus on communicating with students ("Teachers communicate in ways that are clearly understood by their students. They are perceptive and responsive listeners who are able to communicate with students in a variety of ways even when language is a barrier" [Colorado State Council for Educator Effectiveness 2011a, p. 4]). Kansas and Nebraska focus on communicating with parents or family involvement ("Demonstrate an understanding of communication skills and be able to apply them appropriately with parents and other adults, including being able to conduct conferences and communicate with parents and other adults representing varying cultural backgrounds, including, if possible, parents whose first language is other than English" [Nebraska Department of Education 2010b, p. 4]).

### Assessing students' language status and development

Only Kansas includes assessing students' language status and development among their standards, suggesting that it is important for teachers to prepare "all students for assessments based on their language and learning needs" (Kansas State Department of Education 2010, p. 7). It was not clear, however, whether this statement refers to ELL students in particular or to all students.

**All seven states include communicating with students and families among their standards, focusing on communicating effectively in a variety of ways, even when language is a barrier or when a student's or parent's first language is not English**

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

The topical organization of this content analysis was supported in part by recent reviews of research on effective practices for teaching ELL students (see appendix A). The relevant research, however, is emerging and might support different knowledge and skills in the future. Because of changing policy—increasing emphasis on defining teacher effectiveness and quality and on developing educator evaluation systems—the available professional teaching standards documents were still evolving at the time of this study. The present findings, then, are specific to the time this analysis was conducted, the data sources and standards content used, K–6/8 general education teachers, and the seven Central Region states. This study might need updating as states develop standards and evaluation systems in response to federal priorities in educator evaluation and to the need to provide teachers with better information to improve their practices (U.S. Department of Education 2010).

## APPENDIX A
## DESCRIBING THE SIX ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER TOPICS

This appendix describes the six topics for teaching English language learner (ELL) students that are examined in this study.

To clarify boundaries and definitions and include research-based examples of practices for the six White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010) topics, the study team for the current report consulted the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) bibliographic database and the standards for general education teachers of ELL students suggested by a panel of experts convened by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008).

Abstracts were searched in ERIC using the terms "English language learner" and "effective" and the criterion that the publication be peer reviewed. Also consulted were a recent California Department of Education report that synthesized research-based guidelines for teaching ELL students (California Department of Education 2010)[4] and an Institute of Education Sciences practice guide on effective literacy and English language instruction (Gersten et al. 2007). From each source, the research-based guidelines with the strongest evidence were identified—in breadth, for a literature base to build conclusions around (use of multiple studies, as in meta-analyses), and in scientific rigor, for drawing causal inferences about the effects of practice on student outcomes (use of experimental and quasi-experimental research designs and peer-reviewed publication). Finally, the six White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010) topics for teaching ELL students were checked against the National Clearinghouse content. Neither the research nor the standards identified topics not covered in that study.[5]

*Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds* includes respecting and incorporating first languages, recognizing how culture and language intersect with classroom participation, and understanding the needs and resources that students with different levels of formal schooling and literacy bring to class—all important for ELL students' academic success (Antunez 2002; Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008; Menken and Look 2000). Exemplary teachers of ELL students might invite the students to share their experiences with the class, perhaps asking them about what they have done and seen on trips to their home countries (Hall et al. 2002). ELL students sharing their experiences helps teachers understand how difficult it can be for these students to discuss their background knowledge in English (Short and Fitzsimmons 2007). And fostering home–school connections (see the communicating with students and families topic) can help students bring their linguistic capital and knowledge into the classroom (Uchikoshi and Maniates 2010).

*Differentiating instruction* is the selection, adaptation, and use of instructional strategies that accommodate the needs of ELL students. One example is arranging small-group work or paired work to allow more frequent participation and interaction. Small-group work in middle school, compared with whole-class instruction, leads to more frequent participation in lesson-focused conversation among ELL students (Brooks and Thurston 2010). Further, interactive activities—such as cooperative learning, peer-assisted learning, and discussions—are effective strategies for providing ELL students practice and extended learning opportunities (Gersten et al. 2007; Saunders and Goldenberg 2010). These activities are most effective when they require students to produce targeted words and language forms, teach students how to cooperate and provide peer-assistance, and are adapted to the individual student's language proficiency (Gersten et al. 2007; Saunders and Goldenberg 2010).

Another example of differentiating instruction is the strategic use of students' first language (translating English words; August and Shanahan 2010). Indeed, teaching math with primary language assistance from the teacher or an instructional aide correlates positively with higher math achievement

among ELL students (Williams et al. 2007). Moreover, eliciting and supporting ELL students' use of their first language helps them learn the content of instruction delivered in English (August and Shanahan 2006; Langer, Escamilla, and Aragon 2010). Modeling also provides effective assistance to ELL students by supplementing verbal instructions with demonstrations of strategies for reading comprehension and writing.

*Selecting materials or curricula* means selecting and using nonlinguistic representations and other materials that make instruction and concepts as understandable as possible (Hill and Flynn 2006). One example is using pictures and gestures (August and Shanahan 2010).

*Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support* is important for providing structured English instruction and opportunities for guided practice (Saunders and Goldenberg 2010). "Acquiring a second language is fundamentally different than acquiring a first, since greater [second language] immersion does not necessarily lead to increased acquisition" (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008, p. 28).

One of 13 recommended National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition standards for mainstream teachers is that teachers "be able to recognize the signs of progressing second language acquisition" (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008, p. 29). Teachers should understand the stages of second language acquisition that ELL students pass through, set appropriate language objectives, ask stage-appropriate questions, and engage students at the correct level of discourse (Hill and Flynn 2006). For example, teachers can ask students in the early production stage of English acquisition questions with one- or two-word answers and those in the advanced fluency stage to recall a story, including the main plot but omitting insignificant details (Hill and Flynn 2006). Teachers should also understand oral and written language structure (the basic units of language, complexity of English spelling, patterns of rhetorical structure) so that they can model proper grammar and explain grammatical errors in ways that can help ELL students edit their writing (Aguirre-Munoz and Amabisca 2010; Clair and Adger 1999; Lucas and Grinberg 2008; Fillmore and Snow 2000). Instruction in English morphology (bringing attention to the meaningful units of words) has positive effects on ELL student achievement (Goodwin and Ahn 2010).

*Communicating with students and families,* through positive home–school connections, can build trust and understanding. ELL students' backgrounds, including their school histories, are so diverse that no one solution can provide appropriate supports and interventions (Short and Fitzsimmons 2007). Communicating with students and families helps avoid misconceptions about language skills, background knowledge, and cultural differences. Teachers should be aware of community resources available to families and identify translation efforts and services to facilitate home–school connections (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008). When no such services are available, peers, siblings, and others who speak a student's home language might help with translation. Communicating in a student's home language can increase parents' comfort when speaking with their child's teacher by telephone and at school pick-up or drop-off (Uchikoshi and Maniates 2010).

*Assessing students' language status and development* can help teachers identify learning needs and adapt to accommodate them. ELL students may be conversationally proficient and able to engage in everyday social interactions, but because academic language is less contextual than conversational language (Hakuta, Butler, and Witt 2000), there could be significant language barriers when teachers deliver instruction and classroom activities in English. When teachers understand the complexity of their academic language, they will be better able to remove language barriers.

## APPENDIX B
## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

For this content analysis of professional teaching standards for K–8 general education teachers in the Central Region states, source documents were obtained, and state officials verified them as appropriate. Content was reviewed and categorized into six topics adapted from a previous analysis of state teaching standards (White, Makkonen, and Stewart 2010): recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds, differentiating instruction, selecting materials or curricula, knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support, communicating with students and families, and assessing students' language status and development.

### Data sources

The primary data source documents, obtained from the education agency website of each state, identified the knowledge and skills required for elementary education teachers in the Central Region states (table B1). The documents reflected states' thinking on teaching standards as of February

TABLE B1
**Data sources**

| State | Document | Content | Grade levels |
|---|---|---|---|
| Colorado | *Colorado Teaching Standards and Descriptions* (January 19, 2011) | Standards (6), components (3–8 per standard), and text describing the elements required of district evaluation systems. | K–12 |
| Kansas | *Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators* (2009/10) | General education standards (6), professional education standards (13), content standards for K–6 endorsement, and knowledge and performance indicators (2–12 per standard) for teachers. | K–6 |
| | *Kansas Evaluation Project Standards Table for Teachers* (draft, October 2010) | Standards (10), critical features (2–7 per standard), and evidence. | K–12 |
| Missouri | *Missouri Teaching Standards* draft (January 20, 2011) | Standards (10), quality indicators (3–7 per standard), and descriptive statements meant to distinguish five levels of professional teaching (candidate, emerging, developing, proficient, and distinguished) for each quality indicator. | K–12 |
| Nebraska | *Nebraska Department of Education Guidelines Recommended for Use with Rule 20* (Approval of Teacher Education Programs), 006.03 Unit Program Standards, approved by the State Board of Education on August 9, 2007. | Candidate proficiencies related to expected knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, including proficiencies associated with diversity and technology that are aligned with the expectations in professional, state, and institutional standards. | K–12 |
| | *Nebraska Department of Education Rule 24, Regulations for Certification Endorsements, Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24* Guidelines (January 6, 2010). | Recommended knowledge and skill requirements (8 topic areas, A–H, with 3–8 elements, each with 0–9 subelements). | K–6 |
| North Dakota | *50015 Elementary Teacher Education Standards* (North Dakota Teacher Preparation Standards, revised 2005, mandated 2006) | Categories (6), standards identifying candidate knowledge, understanding, and use for each category, and examples of performance assessments (5–16) to assess candidates' understanding and abilities. | K–8 |
| South Dakota | Association for Childhood Education International (2007). *Elementary Education Standards and Supporting Explanation.* | Standards (5) and text explaining the relevant knowledge, understanding, and skills for each standard. | K–8 |
| Wyoming | Association for Childhood Education International (2007). *Elementary Education Standards and Supporting Explanation.* | Standards (5) and text explaining the relevant knowledge, understanding, and skills for each standard. | K–6 |

2011 (the most recent publically available data) and provided comparable content across states. The documents did not identify courses, activities, or experiences important for teacher preparation programs but instead described the knowledge and skills expected of program graduates. The study team contacted a single official in each state responsible for implementing professional teaching standards (state officials representing offices of teacher education and licensure or certification, of teacher quality, of adult program services, or of a state's standards and practices board) and asked the officials to verify the appropriateness of the source documents for this study.

In Colorado and Missouri, the knowledge and skills content was in a standalone, state-specific professional teaching standards document. In Kansas, where efforts focused on developing draft professional teaching standards, both the draft document and the adopted professional standards documents were used. In South Dakota and Wyoming, the content was embedded in state-adopted national standalone professional teaching standards from the Association for Childhood Education International. In Nebraska and North Dakota, the content was in legislation and guidance on approving teacher preparation programs. The North Dakota elementary education teacher candidate knowledge and skills were also based on the Association for Childhood Education International standards.

## Preparation

To prepare the content for analysis, the principal investigator read the source documents for each state and identified the sections relevant for the content analysis. The content represented all relevant teaching standards (or knowledge and skills) required for endorsement to teach general education in grades K–8 and did not overlap.[6] At the most general level, the content included category and standard names ("Instruction"), statements ("The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners") or recommendations for required knowledge and skills ("Demonstrate an understanding of communication skills and be able to apply them appropriately with parents and other adults").

More detailed content for each standard included components, indicators, critical features, supporting explanations, and descriptive text. The most specific content (sample evidence and performance assessments) were provided in the state source documents for optional use in teacher education programs or in district evaluation systems—as ways to measure whether teachers and teacher candidates met the standards. Once the relevant sections were identified, the study team applied sequential identification numbers to the reference statements. The unit of analysis was a reference statement comprising at least one complete sentence.

## Coding

The study team developed a preliminary coding protocol for relevant reference statements. The first step was to search the content for key terms used by White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010): "English learners," "English language learners," "English proficiency," "students whose first language is not English," "students for whom English is a new language," "heritage language," "home language," "native language," "language skills," "language development," "language acquisition," "language proficiency," "linguistic background," "linguistic development," "linguistic heritage," "linguistic diversity," and "linguistically sensitive." The study team also searched the following key terms, based on the research and related literature described in the main report: "bilingual[ism]," "comprehensib[le/ility]," "dialect," "academic English," "primary language assistance," "accommodation[s]," and "modification[s]."

The second step was to extract the reference statements, record them, and categorize them into one or more of six English language learner (ELL) topics (table B2). When reference statements included two actions (for example, understand and adapt), they were categorized in two categories. The most

TABLE B2
**Definitions of study topics**

| Topic | Definition |
|---|---|
| Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds | Specialized knowledge related to respecting and understanding first languages and to how home language and literacy intersect with classroom participation. |
| Differentiating instruction | The selection, adaptation, and use of different instructional strategies to accommodate the needs of English language learner students. Examples of strategies for differentiating instruction included making content comprehensible, providing primary language assistance, and arranging small groups or pairs for instruction and cooperative learning. |
| Selecting materials or curricula | Selecting, planning, and using materials and resources that make instruction and content as understandable as possible. |
| Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support | Understanding second language acquisition, bilingualism, language structure, and other related theories on the role of first and second language development in learning. |
| Communicating with students and families | Knowledge and skills related to reaching out to, communicating with, and including English language learner students and their families in academic learning. |
| Assessing students' language status and development | Assessment skills related to recognizing students' language status and development to identify needs and adaptations to accommodate those needs, including removal of language barriers in both instruction and assessment. |

specific reference statements (for example, indicators, sample evidence) were categorized by topic but extracted and preserved in the context of the more general content, such as the standard (Instruction). Only the standards that refer to selected keywords related to ELL students, language or linguistic diversity, and language acquisition in the six topic areas were analyzed. Indirect references to ELL students (for example, "all students") or references to cultural diversity were not included. And though recognition of cultural diversity is important in teaching, it was not the focus of this analysis. Reference statements solely about cultural diversity were excluded; reference statements about both diversity in language background and cultural diversity were included.

To familiarize the study team with the coding process, the source documents for one state were used in a training exercise led by the principal investigator and two other members of the study team: a standards content analyst and an expert in teaching ELL students. For the training, the study team adhered to the preliminary protocol and then participated in a whole-group discussion about each reference statement. Reference statements were identified and categorized according to consensus reached by the three team members. The team refined the definitions of and distinctions between each topic identified in White, Makkonen, and Stewart (2010), altering the names of two topics.[7]

After the study team members were trained and topic definitions refined, the coding process began. First, the principal investigator assigned pairs of researchers from a team of six to each state. Next, each member of the assigned pairs independently located and categorized reference statements into one or more topics. The researchers then entered the reference statements, recorded their categories, compared results, and identified discrepancies. Consensus on the discrepancies was sought through discussion; if no consensus was reached, a third researcher reviewed the discrepancy and together, the three researchers reached a decision. Each state official reviewed the location and coding of relevant reference statements for accuracy and completeness.

For each state, a profile of reference statements was created, showing the content identified for each topic (appendix C). Each profile summarized the state's source documents and indicated:

- Whether the standards were embedded in teacher education program approval

regulations or presented in a standalone standards document for use with licensed teachers.

- Whether the standards were aligned with or adopted from national standards (Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) or the standards of a particular professional association (Association for Childhood Education International).[8]
- Whether the standards were in draft form and when state board of education review was expected.

## Analysis

For each state, a matrix was created for logging references by topic. The number of topics was tallied. Gaps, patterns of coverage, and commonalities and differences among the standards were then identified.

## APPENDIX C
## STATE PROFILES

This appendix summarizes each Central Region state's standards for teaching English language learner (ELL) students, as well as other relevant policies, rules, regulations, and statutes. The study team reviewed state documents for references to six topics relevant to teaching ELL students:

- Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.
- Differentiating instruction.
- Selecting materials or curricula.
- Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.
- Communicating with students and families.
- Assessing students' language status and development.

### Colorado

Performance-based Standards for Colorado Teachers has referenced teaching ELL students since as early as 2000 (Colorado Department of Education 2000). Among Colorado's standards, which reflect the knowledge and skills required of beginning teachers, Standard 6 (Knowledge of Individualization of Instruction) states that teachers should be able to respond to the needs and experiences that children bring to the classroom, including those involving linguistics. It specifies that teachers need to "demonstrate the ability to design and/or modify standards-based instruction in response to diagnosed student needs, including the needs of exceptional learners and English language learners" (Colorado Department of Education 2000, p. 4).

In 2010, Colorado enacted a teacher and principal evaluation law, SB10-191, to shift the basis for determining professional status from number of years of service to consecutive years of demonstrated effective performance (Colorado State Council for Educator Effectiveness 2011b). The law charges the 15-member State Council for Educator Effectiveness with defining principal and teacher effectiveness and establishing an evaluation system based in part on students' academic growth. In January 2011, the council adopted Colorado Quality Standards for Teacher Effectiveness (Colorado State Council for Educator Effectiveness 2011b). For the current study, researchers analyzed Colorado Teaching Standards and Descriptions, dated January 19, 2011 (Colorado State Council for Educator Effectiveness 2011a). These standards and descriptions, as part of the council's proposed evaluation system, were reviewed by stakeholders in February and March 2011 and submitted as recommendations to the State Board of Education in April 2011.

Colorado Teaching Standards and Descriptions includes two topics in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Differentiating instruction.* "Teachers collaborate with a range of support specialists to develop and use appropriate strategies and resources to adapt to the learning needs of various groups of students including those with special needs, English language learner students, and gifted and talented learners" (Standard 2, Teachers establish a respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students, Description (d), p. 2).
- *Communicating with students and families.* "Teachers communicate in ways that are clearly understood by their students. They are perceptive and responsive listeners who are able to communicate with students in a variety of ways even when language is a barrier. Teachers help students to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively, with appropriate attention to grammar, spelling, and writing skills" (Standard 3, Teachers facilitate learning for their students, Description (g), p. 4).

## Kansas

Two documents were reviewed that describe the teacher knowledge and skills required of Kansas general elementary education teachers: Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators (Kansas State Department of Education 2009) and Kansas Evaluation Project Standards Table for Teachers (Kansas State Department of Education 2010). The Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators document includes three sets of teaching standards for Kansas teacher education institutions to base their programs on: general education, professional education, and content. The general education standards identify basic knowledge that teachers must attain in their preparatory program in such areas as communication, world culture, math, and child development. The professional education standards are adapted from the 1992 Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. The content standards describe teacher knowledge for a variety of areas.

For this study, the professional education standards and the Early Childhood to Late Childhood (K–6) section of the content standards were reviewed. Standards for teachers seeking endorsement as a teacher of English for speakers of other languages, though described, were not included in the review because the target group of teachers was general education elementary school teachers.

The Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators document includes four topics in its professional education and K–6 content standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* The educator understands that diversity, exceptionality, and limited English proficiency affect learning (Professional Education Standard 3, Knowledge 2).

  The educator understands how students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family and community values (Professional Education Standard 3, Knowledge 4).

  The teacher has knowledge of the significance of social, economic, cultural, and linguistic diversity for development and learning of literacy skills and recognizes that children are best understood in the contexts of family, culture, and society (K–6 Content Standard 1, Knowledge 8).

  The teacher understands the interrelationships among culture, language, and thought and the function of the home language in the development of young children (K–6 Content Standard 1, Knowledge 9).

  The teacher understands culture as an integrated whole that explains the functions and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns (K–6 Content Standard 4, Knowledge 2).

  The teacher creates a learning environment that reflects respect and adaptations for children's cultures, home languages, individual abilities and disabilities, family contexts, and communities (K–6 Content Standard 7, Performance 2).

- *Differentiating instruction.* The teacher creates a learning environment that reflects respect and adaptations for children's culture, home languages, individual abilities and disabilities, family contexts, and communities (K–6 Content Standard 7, Performance 2).

- *Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.* The educator knows about the process of second language acquisition and about strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English (Professional Education Standard 3, Knowledge 3).

  The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the phonemic, morphemic, semantic,

syntactic, and pragmatic systems of language and their relation to the reading and writing process (K–6 Content Standard 1, Performance 6).

- *Communicating with students and families.* The teacher understands and values the function of the home language in the total development of children and the interrelationships among culture, language, and the involvement of family in the school (K–6 Content Standard 7, Knowledge 6).

Kansas Evaluation Project Standards Table for Teachers includes two topics in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* Establishing a learning environment that encourages respect for all people, languages, and cultures (Standard 3, Critical Feature 2).

- *Assessing students' language status and development.* Preparing all students for assessments based on their language and learning needs (Standard 6, Critical Feature 4).

## Missouri

In 2009, Missouri adopted a law (Section 161.380, as part of Senate Bill 291) requiring all public schools to develop teaching standards. The Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators, a statewide committee that advises the Office of Educator Quality at the Missouri Department of Education, is revising its Missouri Teaching Standards draft (Missouri Advisory Council of Certification of Educators 2011). When this study was conducted, the standards were still in development. The study team used the latest draft available (January 20, 2011) in the analysis.

Missouri's standards reflect expectations found in other model teaching standards, including those from other states and the latest draft of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Model Core Teaching Standards. The standards, described in a continuum (candidate, emerging, developing, proficient, distinguished), will provide a model for Missouri districts to adopt if they choose. The standards also describe data points that could provide evidence on whether a teacher has met the standard at the appropriate level of the continuum.

The Missouri Teacher Standards draft includes three topics in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* The emerging teacher modifies instruction to reflect his/her understanding of how students' learning is influenced by individual experience, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family and community value (Standard 3, Quality Indicator 3, 3E3).

- *Differentiating instruction.* The emerging teacher modifies instruction to reflect his/her understanding of how students' learning is influenced by individual experience, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community value (Standard 3, Quality Indicator 3, 3E3).

- *Communicating with students and families.* The developing teacher uses correct, effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication skills. These skills include means to communicate with students whose first language is not standard English or whose disability requires specific forms of communication (Standard 7, Quality Indicator 1, 7D1).

  The proficient/distinguished teacher consistently uses and fosters correct, effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication in his/her students and amongst all participants in the classroom through modeling and instructional practices, including as a means to communicate with students whose first language is not standard English or whose disability requires specific forms of communication (Standard 7, Quality Indicator 1, 7P1/7S1).

## Nebraska

In Nebraska, Title 92, Chapters 20, 21, and 24 of the state education rules and the associated Rule 20 and Rule 24 Guidelines specify requirements for teacher education programs, certification, and endorsements (Sharon Katt, personal communication, January 20, 2011). The Rule 20 Guidelines include six standards that teacher education programs must meet to be approved. Some of these standards identify the knowledge and skills expected of teacher certificate candidates. The Rule 24 Guidelines identify the knowledge and skills that teacher education programs must prepare prospective teachers to demonstrate to qualify for one or more certificate endorsements.

For this study, researchers analyzed the teacher knowledge and skills identified in two documents: the Unit Program Standards (Section 006.03) Guidelines Recommended for Use with Rule 20 (approved by the State Board of Education, August 9, 2007; Nebraska Department of Education 2007) and the Elementary Education Endorsement Guidelines (adopted by the State Board of Education, November 4, 2005) included in the Rule 24 Regulations for Certificate Endorsements (approved by the State Board of Education, January 6, 2010; Nebraska Department of Education 2010). Both documents were required to represent all relevant and nonoverlapping content.

Unit Program Standards (Section 006.03) Guidelines Recommended for Use with Rule 20 includes one topic in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Differentiating instruction.* Candidates are aware of different learning styles and adapt instruction or services appropriately for all students, including linguistically and culturally diverse students and students with exceptionalities. (B. Candidate Performance, 4. Diversity, a. Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Curriculum and Experiences).

Elementary Education Endorsement Guidelines Rule 24 Regulations for Certificate Endorsements includes one topic in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Communicating with students and families.* Demonstrate an understanding of communication skills and be able to apply them appropriately with parents and other adults, including being able to conduct conferences and communicate with parents and other adults representing varying cultural backgrounds, including, if possible, parents whose first language is other than English (G.2).

## North Dakota

North Dakota sets standards for and approves more than 30 types of teacher education programs. The 50015 Elementary Teacher Education Standards are used to accredit programs preparing K–8 general education teachers (North Dakota Education Standards Practices Board 2005). Each teacher education standard identifies what candidates should know, understand, and be able to do to in a particular certification/license area. The board adopted the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education performance-oriented standards in 2004, revised them in 2005, and mandated them in 2006 (North Dakota Education Standards and Practice Board, n.d.). The National Council standards incorporate the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards and reflect the Association for Childhood Education International elementary education standards and supporting explanation (Association for Childhood Education International 2007).

Four topics are included in the standards for teaching ELL students contained in the 50015 Elementary Teacher Education Standards:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* Identify how elementary students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, disabilities, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values (Standard 3.

Instruction b. Adaptation to diverse students, Sample Performance Assessment 2).

- *Differentiating instruction.* Use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and result in their students becoming competent, effective users of language (Standard 2. Curriculum b. English language arts, Sample Performance Assessment 4).

- *Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.* Use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and result in their students becoming competent, effective users of language (Standard 2. Curriculum b. English language arts, Sample Performance Assessment 4).

- *Communicating with students and families.* Use communication theory, language development, and the role of language in learning among elementary students, and they also understand how cultural and gender differences can affect communication in the classroom (Standard 3. Instruction e. Communication to foster learning, Sample performance Assessment 1).

## South Dakota

The Administrative Rules of South Dakota 24:53 (South Dakota Legislature n.d.) addresses state teacher preparation program approval. Article 24:53:07:04 states that programs for K–8 elementary education must be based on the 2006 Association for Childhood Education International Elementary Education Standards and Supporting Explanation (South Dakota Legislature n.d.). Programs for K–8 elementary education "shall require candidates to demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge and skills identified in the [Association for Childhood Education International] standards" (South Dakota Legislature n.d.). The study team reviewed the most current association standards (2007).

Elementary Education Standards and Supporting Explanation includes four topics in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* They [teacher candidates] understand how elementary students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, disabilities, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values. (Standard 3.2 Instruction, Adaptation to diverse learners, Supporting Explanation).

- *Differentiating instruction.* They [teacher candidates] use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and results in their becoming competent, effective users of language (Standard 2.1 Curriculum, Reading, Writing, and Oral Language, Supporting Explanation).

- *Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.* They [teacher candidates] use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and results in their becoming competent, effective users of language (Standard 2.1 Curriculum, Reading, Writing, and Oral Language, Supporting Explanation).

- *Communicating with students and families.* They [teacher candidates] use communication theory, language development, and the role of language in learning among elementary students, and they also understand how cultural

and gender differences can affect communication in the classroom (Standard 3.5 Instruction, Communication to foster learning, Supporting Explanation).

## Wyoming

The Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board licenses endorsement areas and approves teacher preparation programs based on specialized professional association standards and Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards. Wyoming Rule 76, Regulations Governing Licensing for School Personnel (Wyoming Secretary of State n.d.), regulates teacher licensure and determines program approval standards for endorsement areas. It provides guidance to teacher education institutions that must submit their teacher education program to the appropriate specialized professional association. The specialized professional association report is then submitted to the board for final approval.

According to the regulations related to the board (chapter 4, pp. 3–4), the Association for Childhood Educational International, a specialized professional association, provides professional teaching standards for elementary education teachers (K–6) in Wyoming. The study team reviewed Elementary Education Standards and Supporting Explanation (Association for Childhood Education International 2007), which provides guidelines for education institutions by identifying basic knowledge that teachers must attain in their preparatory programs. It also includes supporting explanation and source documents for each topic area in the association standards.

Elementary Education Standards and Supporting Explanation includes four topics in its standards for teaching ELL students:

- *Recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds.* They [teacher candidates] understand how elementary students' learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents, disabilities, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family and community values." (Standard 3.2 Instruction, Adaptation to diverse learners, Supporting Explanation).

- *Differentiating instruction.* They [teacher candidates] use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and results in their becoming competent, effective users of language (Standard 2.1 Curriculum, Reading, Writing, and Oral Language, Supporting Explanation).

- *Knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.* They [teacher candidates] use their knowledge and understanding of language, first and second language development, and the language arts to design instructional programs and strategies that build on students' experiences and existing language skills and results in their becoming competent, effective users of language (Standard 2.1 Curriculum, Reading, Writing, and Oral Language, Supporting Explanation).

- *Communicating with students and families.* They [teacher candidates] use communication theory, language development, and the role of language in learning among elementary students, and they also understand how cultural and gender differences can affect communication in the classroom (Standard 3.5 Instruction, Communication to foster learning, Supporting Explanation).

## NOTES

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1. According to Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and related state programs and services, an English language learner student or limited English proficient student is a student who does not speak English as his or her dominant language, who was not born in the United States, or who comes from an environment where English is not the dominant language; who has difficulty succeeding when the language of instruction is English; and whose limited English proficiency is confirmed by performance on a state-approved assessment. Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota also identify English language learner students as students who are Native American or Native Alaskan, native residents of outlying areas, or migratory (children who have moved across state lines within the past three years with families working temporarily or seasonally in agriculture, fishing, or food processing).

2. The analysis for North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming yielded the same findings because they had the same accreditation and standards source document (standards from the Association for Childhood Education International, a specialized professional association and partner of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education).

3. For example, Nebraska standards consider the ability to "adapt instruction or services appropriately for all students, including linguistically and culturally diverse students and students with exceptionalities," important for graduates of teacher preparation programs (Nebraska Department of Education 2007). By contrast, under the differentiation of curriculum and instruction topic, the clearinghouse recommends that mainstream teachers be "able to increase student engagement by identifying language challenges in a text, differentiating material, and grouping student in purposeful and meaningful ways" (Ballantyne, Sanderman, and Levy 2008, p. 32).

4. Two chapters in the California Department of Education report were especially relevant: the Saunders and Goldenberg (2010) chapter, which summarized and formulated recommendations based on relevant meta-analyses and research syntheses on English language development instruction; and the August and Shanahan (2010) chapter, which summarized research on English literacy instruction for English language learner students.

5. Two additional topics were identified, but they addressed system-level capacities rather than teacher-level knowledge and skills and were not included in this analysis.

6. Kansas was an exception. The Kansas State Department of Education was revising all licensure standards during data preparation for this study. To represent the state's latest thinking, in addition to the existing Regulations and Standards document, researchers included the draft standards as specified in the Kansas Evaluation Project Standards Table for Teachers.

7. Recognizing and supporting diversity became recognizing and supporting diverse language backgrounds; knowing second language acquisition and other learning theory and strategies became knowing theories of second language acquisition and related strategies of support.

8. The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium is a consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to improving teacher preparation, licensing, and professional development. The Association for Childhood Education International is a specialized professional association in education and a partner of the National Council on Accreditation of Teacher Education.

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