

Subject Matter Content Performance- Based Assessment

Initial/Professional Teacher Education
University of Colorado at Denver

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Resources:

Colorado Model Content Standards

Colorado Teacher Education Standards

What is the purpose and importance of subject matter content in teaching?

When educators talk about students' academic achievement in schools, they are referring to students' learning of subject matter content. Educators typically consider core content to include reading, writing, math, science and social studies. In order to help students learn content, teachers must have a depth of content knowledge and terminology. Teachers must also have a knowledge of how the content is organized and how experts construct new knowledge. Since knowledge is constantly evolving, teachers must also have the motivation and skills to continue to learn new content and skills. An effective teacher not only knows and continues to learn but also strives to understand the place that this content has in students' lives. Being aware of such a place helps make content personally relevant to students and culturally relevant to the context in which they live out their daily lives.

During your internships, you will be involved with the assessment and instruction of subject matter content for all learners. You should therefore seek opportunities to teach subject matter content in a wide range of contexts with an emphasis on differentiating instruction for the wide range of students in the context of your school.

What is the nature of the *Subject Matter Content PBA*?

Primarily, this is an assessment of your ability to find and construct new content understandings and integrate mathematics and literacy in your instruction. The vehicle for the attainment of new subject matter and skills within the IPTE program is inquiry based. This involves learning that results from interacting with experienced teaching professionals, self investigation of how to acquire new content and skills and reflection on how to make them part of your professional tools. These new understandings are intended to help you expand your thinking and problem-solving skills about specific aspects of school and classroom life. They further provide you with opportunities to explore life in schools from a number of different perspectives. Evidences of attainment of this second component include reflective papers and other forms of content attainment assessments within content methods courses, and a self-developed lesson planning documents co-selected by you and your clinical teacher as representative of subject matter content understanding.

Where does the *Subject Matter Content PBA* fit into my studies to become a teacher?

For secondary students, the subject matter content PBA will occur across the first three internships of the licensing program and be supported through your scholars seminar. For elementary students, the subject matter content PBA will occur when you take your science and social studies methods courses. Through written commentary and supporting artifacts, you will provide evidence of learning and growth in subject matter content.

What standards are addressed by the *Subject Matter Content PBA*?

This PBA supports components of the following Colorado Department of Education Teacher Standards:

Standard 4: Knowledge of Content

The elementary teacher is knowledgeable, in addition to literacy and mathematics in the following content areas: civics, economics, geography, history, science, music, visual arts, and physical education.

Middle school and secondary content teachers shall be knowledgeable in literacy and mathematics and expert in their content endorsement area(s).

4.3 Apply expert content knowledge to enrich and extend student learning.

4.4 Integrate literacy and mathematics into content area instruction.

How does the *Subject Matter Content PBA* help me learn the teaching roles that are the foundation of the IPTE program?

This PBA helps you learn teaching roles by accomplishing the following responsibilities:

- Understand the central concepts and the structures of the discipline you teach,
- Develop methods of effective instruction,
- Develop an educational climate that nourishes intellectual growth.

What do I need to do?

Teacher Candidates are responsible for demonstrating proficiency in each component of this PBA. For each component, you will produce artifacts to support proficiency. The components and specific artifacts for each are explained below.

The teacher candidate has the responsibility to keep a record and copies of each artifact for inclusion in their portfolio. The teacher candidate must also make sure he/she is consulting with the clinical teacher regularly to ensure opportunities for using and improving the knowledge and skills being learned. If the teacher candidate finds that he/she is lacking in background knowledge required to engage in assessment and teaching, then he or she must seek out that knowledge through available resources: school personnel, university personnel, professional literature, etc.

Subject Matter Content PBA Activities for Secondary Teaching

Demonstration of ability to acquire new knowledge and skills.

- Evidence of reflective, self investigation of how to acquire new content and skills and reflection on how to make them part of your professional tools, supported by a paper that recognizes deficiencies in content knowledge and skills in your teaching area and develops plan of correction, resulting in a professional plan of learning.

How does this PBA align with teaching responsibilities?

This PBA helps you to become a:

“Professional” by giving you opportunities to communicate and collaborate with a variety of resources, begin thinking about the legal aspects of education, analyzing practice and making revisions based on analysis.

“Learning Facilitator” by using a variety of resources within and outside the school building to meet the needs of all learners, encouraging self-advocacy, self-determination and self-reflection, developing management skills for creating a positive classroom climate, and allows for reflection and evaluation of professional choices and actions.

“Scholar” by giving you opportunities to understand content areas, embed and apply inquiry into your professional practice, and make connections among ideas within and between disciplines.

“Leader” by learning the Colorado Content Standards and by learning about other standards that are relevant to your teaching area.

“Student Advocate” by offering students appropriate social, emotional, physical and academic challenges, respects students as individuals, involving others, including students, in activities that will increase learning and/or their well being in and out of school.

How will my performance be evaluated and scored?

Evaluation will be based on showing proficiency in each of the two parts of the PBA. Your professional record, reflections, successful test performances, paper evaluations and lesson plans will be used as artifact to demonstrate this proficiency. Your reflections should be accurate, concise, and thoughtful. Your artifacts should demonstrate your professional content and skill learning and growth.