



## Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

### *Establishing the Learning Environment and the Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading & Writing*

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The [Establishing the Learning Environment Overview](#) provides the research base associated with this evidence-based instructional practice.

#### **What are connections between the Evidenced-Based Instructional Practice #1: Establishing the Learning Environment and the *KAS for Reading and Writing*?**

Communication is at the heart of the *KAS for Reading and Writing*. The standards require students to make sense of texts independently and with the help of others. Students also must use cognitive strategies, independently and flexibly, to acquire rich content knowledge and develop into independent, proficient lifelong learners. In the Reading and Writing Standards, it is through texts that students think critically and analytically about the world around them. They communicate their thinking to others through written and/or oral expression; therefore, it is crucial that teachers establish a learning environment where students feel comfortable and safe communicating honestly and respectfully with their peers.

Teachers will want to be especially mindful of establishing a healthy environment to facilitate the learning of the Integration of Knowledge and Ideas standards (7-9 for both Reading Literature and Reading Informational Texts Strands). These standards involve deep student engagement in the content, and students are expected to respond to multiple texts in an expressive manner. Students will need to feel confident in sharing their thinking and supporting their thinking with textual evidence and background knowledge, while also being open to questions, differing ideas and new ways of thinking. Similarly, in the Composition Strand, Guiding Principle 4, requires students to interact and collaborate with others when creating and publishing products. In order for students to do this effectively, the learning environment should be intentionally designed to support students' sense of belonging, to promote peer and teacher interactions, and to nurture healthy relationships.

Additionally, the ten Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices (ILPs), which are also found in the *KAS for Reading and Writing*, are fundamental to fostering a literacy-rich environment that goes beyond teaching and learning isolated skills. Through literacy-rich environments, students are empowered as independent, lifelong learners who think deeply and critically about text. Through these foundational practices teachers also help students employ the writing process for various purposes and audiences to become effective, independent communicators. It is important for teachers to embed opportunities for students to experience the practices daily as they teach the standards and create a literacy-rich environment. These practices should guide teachers in providing intentional opportunities for students to practice the behaviors of a

literate citizen, leading to a sense of ownership in their learning and improving student motivation, mindset and self-efficacy. Specifically, establishing a positive learning environment is essential to allowing students to utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world (ILP4), collaborate with others to create new meaning (ILP6) and develop a literacy identity that promotes lifelong learning (ILP10)

**What are planning considerations for successful implementation of the Evidenced-Based Instructional Practice #1: Establishing the Learning Environment to ensure that all students have equitable access and opportunity to learn the standards contained in the *KAS for Reading and Writing*?**

- Anticipate possible student misconceptions regarding grade level standards and proactively address them in the instructional planning process to reduce student frustration that can occur when learning new content or content that requires deep student engagement, synthesis and expression.
- Activate background knowledge. Using the mini-progressions in the *KAS*, consider the previous grade level standards as well as available assessment data to determine what students will need to know to be successful. A pre-assessment may be most helpful in determining students' precise learning needs in order to efficiently reach grade level expectations.
- Ensure students know what successful peer collaboration looks and sounds like. Together, establish rules for positive interactions that expect all students to share their opinions and claims, ask questions, listen actively, respond appropriately to their peers and teacher and honor all voices.
- Create learning experiences in which students must contribute ideas actively and respectfully in order to refine understanding and broaden perspectives.
- Provide students with talking stems that allow them to validate others as well as add on to or disagree with others respectfully. Model and practice productive collaborative behaviors using uncharged topics and/or already mastered content so that students can focus on learning the process before being expected to manage the process and their opinions or claims simultaneously.
- Design opportunities for students to engage with a variety of texts and others to confirm, challenge or shape their views and ideas. These types of collaboration experiences help to facilitate understanding and develop an appreciation of diverse experiences and perspectives.
- Provide students with connected and relevant literacy instruction so that they read like a writer/write like a reader, or speak like a listener/listen like a speaker, etc. This is achieved by embedding both receptive (i.e., listening, reading and viewing) and expressive (i.e., speaking, writing and visually representing) elements into daily classroom instruction. These varying but related experiences will motivate students to think critically about their relationship to the world.
- Provide opportunities for all levels of readers and writers to experience success by offering a variety of engaging texts geared toward student interest, demonstrating that multiple reading options exist.

## **What strategies and resources can support the implementation of Evidence-Based Instructional Practice #1: Establishing the Learning Environment within the *KAS for Reading and Writing*?**

Section 1C: Deeper Dive into the Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices, located within the [Getting to Know the KAS for Reading and Writing](#) module, takes a more in-depth look at the purpose and function of the ten practices. Participants explore how the practices fit together like a puzzle to support, equip and empower students as they build knowledge and master skills within the Reading and Writing standards. Completion of this section of the module helps participants recognize more clearly the reciprocity between the ILPs and the establishment of an effective learning environment, as well as how the ILPs facilitate attainment of the standards and increased student engagement. Refer to Section 1C of the [Facilitator's Guide: Getting to Know the KAS for Reading and Writing](#) for explicit instructions.

[Composition in the Classroom](#) is designed to help Kentucky teachers and administrators gain a better understanding of the *KAS for Reading and Writing's* Composition strand. This resource takes an in-depth look at each of the three modes of writing, the three types of writing, and authentic audiences, forms and purposes. Each section on the three modes of writing contains examples of potential instructional resources which could be used in elementary and secondary classrooms. By increasing teachers' knowledge of and providing resources to support the learning of the composition standards, teachers become more equipped to establish a learning environment conducive to learning the composition standards.

[Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis](#) is an interactive professional learning module to help teachers analyze text complexity. By analyzing quantitative and qualitative features as well as reader and task considerations, teachers will be able to use this learning to select appropriate texts for their students. Text selection is an important factor when designing grade appropriate assignments and when establishing an engaging learning environment where students are motivated to read.

[Breaking Down a Reading and Writing Standard](#) is a protocol developed to help educators gain clarity on the depth and rigor of a Reading and Writing standard. Having clarity on the standard, in partnership with knowing the students, prepares teachers to accurately determine what students need to know to achieve the standard, anticipate misconceptions and activate prior knowledge; essentially serving as a prerequisite for designing instruction that cultivates a positive learning environment.

### [Standards Family Guides](#)

The Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) Family Guides have been developed to help families familiarize themselves with the content of each grade level's standards. Each guide contains a standards overview for Reading & Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies and is available in English and Spanish.

### [The Skill, Will, and Thrill of Reading Comprehension](#)

This article by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey addresses comprehension through a three-phase framework consisting of first skill, then will and lastly, thrill. Fisher and Frey explain each of the phases and how framework addresses learning meaning from text but also gained motivation to read and purpose from texts. When teachers recognize comprehension is impacted by student engagement and their motivation to read and understand what they read, the need for developing an effective learning environment becomes even clearer.