exploring questions and topics based on class interest. (See Standard V—Instructional Decision Making.)

Careful reflection helps accomplished teachers contemplate how skilled instructional decision making can better prepare them to capitalize on spontaneous opportunities that may positively transform students’ learning and involvement. They consider how to manage, address, or avoid situations that have a negative impact on teaching and learning and how to embrace situations that lead to deeper understandings. Teachers know that unscheduled events and unexpected opportunities can arise during planned learning experiences and that these situations may provide valuable sources of information about teachers and their students as well as chances to promote student engagement, growth, and understanding. Accomplished teachers analyze their teaching systematically to evaluate the unanticipated decisions they make and the impact that these decisions have on their students’ ability to achieve curricular expectations and fully participate in the life of the class.

Using a wide variety of strategies and techniques, accomplished teachers design instruction characterized at once by its structure and flexibility, planning, articulating, and coordinating activities to meet their goals. Middle childhood generalists adapt their instruction of subject matter as informed by contexts and student needs.

**English Language Arts**

Student mastery of the language arts is essential to success in all subject areas as well as inquiry learning, critical thinking, and problem solving. Accomplished teachers know effective strategies and skills that support reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and multimodal representation. They understand how children acquire and become adept at using oral and written language. Teachers recognize that language is socially, politically, historically, and culturally defined and that its use can vary by ability, gender, region, socioeconomic status, education, and culture. They therefore provide instruction that includes a wide variety of textual materials to appeal to their students’ interests while furnishing them with access to information that will help them navigate the world in which they live.

Accomplished teachers draw on students’ cultural and linguistic experiences as resources for enhancing their communication skills. They employ strategies, adaptations, and resources designed to aid language and literacy development based on students’ specific strengths and needs. With students for whom English is a new language, teachers are aware of second language acquisition techniques and thus recognize that a student’s first language can be used to support the transference of English communication skills. Accomplished teachers advocate for these students and work to obtain the necessary resources for their acquisition of language.

Accomplished teachers provide balanced literacy programs that may include diverse structures such as collaborative or independent reading from a variety of genres. Whether students are emergent, early, or fluent readers, teachers incorporate
reading strategies that build on students’ strengths and meet their needs to construct meaning. These programs may include careful use of skills and strategies for word identification, vocabulary building, comprehension, critical thinking, and fluency. Teachers also provide a number of real and significant opportunities before, during, and after reading for students to express themselves orally and in writing. These processes help students become articulate about the content being studied while developing their analytical skills and building a curiosity that motivates independent exploration.

Accomplished teachers advance their students’ development of communication skills through the mutual reinforcement of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teachers regard these communication skills as reciprocal processes that result in the construction of meaning. They understand the vital role that oral language plays in learning and know that oral and written language are best learned in language-rich environments that provide opportunities to vary language use depending on audience, situation, and purpose. Accomplished teachers employ a variety of methods for students to explore written and oral language so they can communicate effectively in society and achieve personal goals. Teachers also emphasize the importance of critical listening so that students understand that listening well contributes to effective communication and thorough understanding. They are adept at teaching their students how speaking relates to writing and how to recognize and use the conventions of written English. Developing these skills contributes to the proficiency of students as readers, writers, speakers, and viewers.

Accomplished teachers instruct students to approach writing as a means of communicating with others as well as a means of self-expression. They scaffold students’ learning through strategies such as modeling, teacher-guided and group-assisted writing activities, and individual student conferences to advance student facility with different steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. They understand that writing can help develop thinking skills, facilitate personal expression, and enable students to explore the use of different voices and purposes for different audiences. Making use of available instructional tools, they provide students with many opportunities to apply written language skills across curricula using traditional or electronic means—writing explanations of solutions to mathematical problems; writing a research report for science; writing an editorial about a social studies issue; critiquing art; creating stories, poems, or plays; or submitting queries or comments to Web sites. They employ a number of ways to involve their students in meaningful representations of ideas and concepts.

Accomplished teachers facilitate meaningful communication and provide opportunities for students to express themselves orally as individuals, group members, and leaders through activities such as presentations, speeches, debates, and panel discussions, as well as through the use of digital media. They help students understand and appreciate diversity in language and communicative styles, and they model the fluent use of spoken English. Teachers know and stress to their students when to use formal or academic English to promote greater access to personal success, civic influence, and financial independence. They are also aware that
having a shared form of English facilitates communication across societal divisions. However, they respect that dialects or languages may be important to students’ home and community lives and understand that these contribute to students’ learning and feelings of belonging. Consequently, while protecting the integrity of their students’ primary dialect or language, they help every student gain command of academic English.

Accomplished teachers are extensive readers, and they know a wide range of children’s and young adult literature that includes both fiction and non-fiction texts. They provide students with access to a variety of classic and contemporary texts in various genres, including fables, folktales, myths, biographies, and works from varied perspectives and different ethnic and cultural traditions. These texts represent a range of subject-matter areas, styles, and communicative purposes. Teachers might challenge any prejudices that students hold with a study of texts that counter stereotypes. Teachers use a broad base of texts to develop students’ analytical skills and strategies as well as their aesthetic capabilities. For instance, students might study advertisements to analyze media critically and understand the persuasive properties of advertising. The students of accomplished teachers learn to read for different purposes, such as deriving factual knowledge, attaining critical understanding, and seeking personal enjoyment.

Accomplished teachers introduce students to the interpretation of a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction, thereby helping them understand how authors organize and express ideas for different purposes using various forms and text structures. Teachers help their students employ text structures to aid their comprehension of dense, disciplinary texts. They provide opportunities for students to generate written texts, such as experimental reports that include content vocabulary, symbols, charts, graphs, and visualizations. These teachers enrich their curricula by supplementing printed texts with various media and the arts, which reinforce the need to read, view, and listen critically. Teachers encourage students to generate multiple interpretations and provide rationales for their conclusions. They also act on students’ interests to design meaningful projects and provide choices for independent reading. Consequently, teachers foster students’ abilities to understand multiple perspectives while instilling within them a lasting love of reading.

Accomplished teachers are adept at implementing multiple assessments and opportunities to observe students’ progress in reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and multimodal representation. They evaluate their students’ current strengths and determine what they need to learn next. Teachers know that language is learned through approximation and that making mistakes is an integral part of learning. They provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate what they know, what interests them, and how they interpret texts. They provide students with chances to engage in self-assessment while receiving constructive feedback from their peers and teachers. Accomplished teachers excel at using a wide range of response activities, such as journals, dramatic productions, informal presentations, and report writing for the purpose of ongoing assessment. These and other activities provide teachers numerous opportunities to differentiate processes as they measure