

# Strengthening Our Standards

NIET engages in ongoing efforts to increase student ownership and take learning to the next level. In 2021, following a comprehensive review of current research and best practices, we made updates to the K-12 NIET rubric.

Specifically, the rubric descriptors were refined to ensure an increased focus on equity, student ownership, and student work across all domains. To underscore the emphasis on students, we renamed the rubric to the *NIET Teaching and Learning Standards Rubric*.

Some of the changes to the descriptor language include:

- A greater focus on what students are doing and learning
- More emphasis on student work analysis
- Significant shifts in level 5 to show students taking ownership of their learning

In addition, we created more guidance for the *Teacher Content Knowledge* indicator by designing subject-specific look-for tools to help coaches provide rich feedback, including for English language arts,

math, science, and K-2 foundational reading. [Example below.] These resources offer guidance for leaders to help them strengthen instructional practice tied to a teacher's content knowledge as they align with more rigorous standards and curriculum. The look-for tools can be particularly beneficial for leaders who may not have extensive experience with that content area themselves.

We have shared the updated resources in EE PASS. The *Teacher Content Knowledge* look-for tools are also available at [NIET.org/resources](https://NIET.org/resources).

## Below is a snapshot of the look-for tool for K-2 foundational reading, highlighting one descriptor within the *Teacher Content Knowledge* indicator

KEY CONTENT FROM DESCRIPTOR	LOOK-FORS: EXAMPLES OF TEACHER AND STUDENT EVIDENCE	OBSERVATION
Implements a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies	<b>FOCUS (OVERARCHING PRACTICES)</b>	
	Teacher uses gradual release model targeting grade-appropriate foundational reading skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print concepts, including letter recognition (K-1)</li> <li>• Phonological, including phonemic awareness (K-2)</li> <li>• Phonics and word recognition (K-2)</li> <li>• Fluency (From late K)</li> </ul> <i>Students might: learn using written text or with entirely oral/aural activities, depending on the target skill(s)</i>	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher uses formal and informal assessment data to plan and adjust instruction so that all students have enough, but not too much, time and support to master target skills. <i>Students might: take turns responding to teacher prompts or reading aloud while the teacher takes notes</i>	Yes Some Not Yet
	<b>QUESTIONING (WHAT IS HEARD)</b>	
	Teacher prompts students to focus on sounds and to decode systematically ("sound it out") when possible instead of guessing at words using pictures or memorizing them as wholes. <i>Students might: persist through difficulty by isolating, segmenting, and blending sounds when stuck on a word</i>	Yes Some Not Yet
	Teacher focuses feedback on target and previously learned skills: for example, prompting students to correct invented spelling patterns only for words they have already learned how to spell. <i>Students might: spell words incorrectly but in ways that "make sense" given their emerging phonics knowledge</i>	Yes Some Not Yet
	<b>STUDENT WORK (RIGOROUS TASKS)</b>	
	All students practice target skills out of context in varied and multisensory ways: for example, with chants, manipulatives, movement, games, and puzzles. <i>Students might: engage in whole-class, teacher-led games and chants before moving into group or individual work</i>	Yes Some Not Yet
All students practice target and previously learned skills in context through repeated and increasingly fluent readings of decodable text (from late K). <i>Students might: read aloud individually or chorally in small groups determined by recent assessment results</i>	Yes Some Not Yet	