SKILLS and STANDARDS BASED GRADING

Sixth Grade Proficiency Scales

Enjoy this **FREE RESOURCE**

PROFICIENCY SCALE SAMPLE

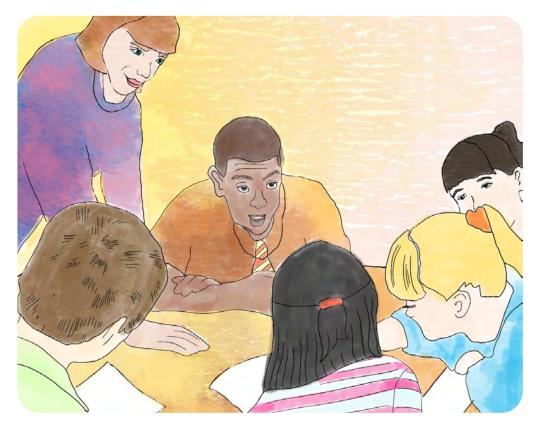To purchase full proficiency scales
head to engaginglearners.com/materials

We help build (and measure!) student achievement

Contact us at

info@EngagingLearners.com

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to schedule a free, no-obligation phone consultation with Dr. McKnight

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Take advantage of our expertise in order to: review and revise existing proficiency scales; create new, customized proficiency scales; evaluate content alignment; and establish on-going teacher support systems Let's work together to increase and measure student literacy growth. Visit www.engaginglearners to learn more.

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As school districts continue to transition from traditional grading to Skills/Standards Based Grading, most of them find that using a set of proficiency scales that have been created and customized to meet their own unique requirements is beneficial. When you get to that point, consider taking advantage of research-based resources and expert advice. Utilize the Engaging Learners team's expertise in order to:

- **Review and revise existing proficiency scales**
  Our experts can examine your existing proficiency scales, work with you to identify strengths and weaknesses, and modify them to include well-designed learning progressions. We'll invigorate and clarify, rather than start from scratch. Engaging Learners has significant experience guiding school districts to keep what's working, clarify elements that are imprecise, and strengthen elements that are ineffective.

- **Create customized proficiency scales**
  The Engaging Learners team is equipped to help schools and districts that don't have time or staff to create their own proficiency scales. By closely examining your state's standards, your existing curricula, and your prioritized goals, our specialists can create scales, identify learning progressions, and communicate goals to your entire teaching staff.

- **Evaluate content alignment**
  Engaging Learners has experience comparing target content articulations, standardized tests, and state standards. Our experts will work side by side with you to identify extraneous content, close gaps, and reduce the number of redundancies. By streamlining content and aligning it with clarified goals, you'll position your teaching staff to dramatically increase their teaching effectiveness.

- **Establish on-going teacher support and communication**
  Continuing support is available as you implement changes. The Engaging Learners team has proven capacity for achieving teacher buy-in. We recognize the need for – and the demands of – creating a successful, collaborative learning environment. We listen to teachers, we respect their time and expertise, and we speak their language. Because, at Engaging Learners, we're teachers ourselves.

Making the Shift

We all know that transitioning between paradigms is challenging. As educators, creating learning contexts where students thrive is our vocation and of course, this is what drives us. Nostalgic educational practices, like letter or number grades are not rooted in research and are not in the best interest of our children. Instead, we need to fearlessly incorporate all that we know about teaching and learning, including Skills/Standards Based Grading and mastery assessments.

It is my hope that this resource will support your fearless efforts to transition to Skills/Standards Based Grading.

Katie

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How to Use This Document

How do we know if a student is proficient in a skill? The proficiency scales answer that question and help to mitigate bias or inconsistencies. This document provides guidance for educators to identify each student's proficiency or mastery of language arts standards.
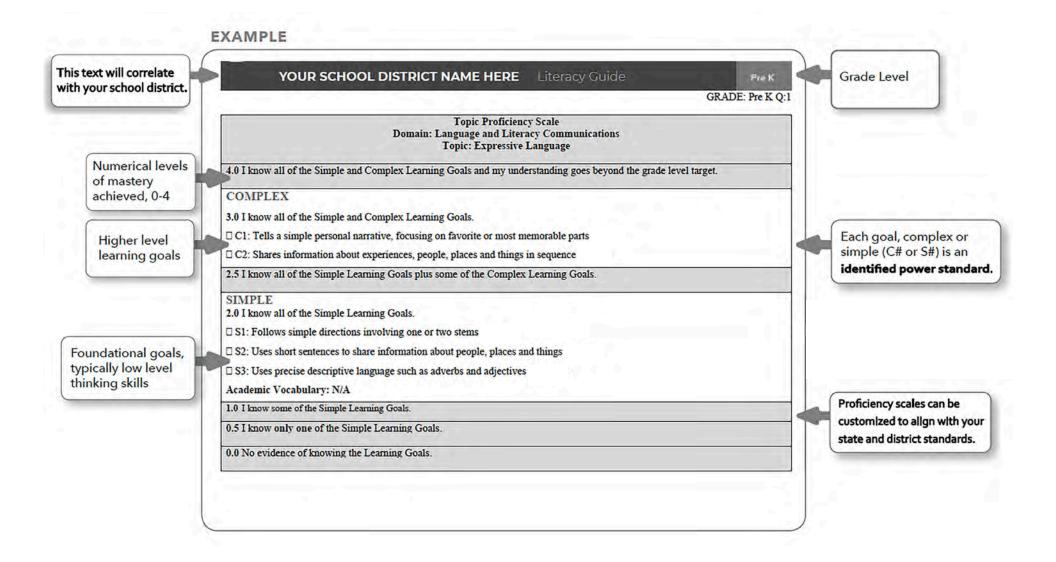
Teachers are expected to teach each standard to a level of student mastery, but what does that look like?

These proficiency scales are aligned with the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts Instruction. Engaging Learners will customize and align with your state or school district's academic standards. Academic standards are written as initial guidance for teachers.
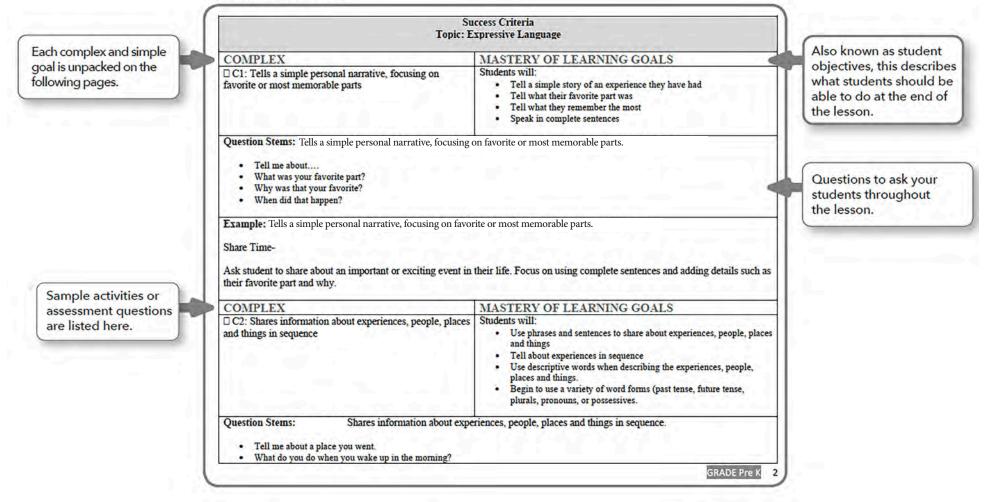
Proficiency levels are organized by goals: complex goals and simple goals. Rating a student at a Level 4 Proficiency verifies that the student can demonstrate all complex and simple goals and that the student's understanding goes beyond grade level expectations. A Level 3 Proficiency rating concludes that a student can demonstrate all of the simple goals, plus some of the complex learning goals. Level 2states that a student can demonstrate all of the outlined simple goals. A Level 1 verifies that a student can demonstrate some of the simple learning goals, and at a Level .5 Proficiency a student can demonstrate only one of the simple learning goals. A Level 0 signifies that there is no evidence of learning.

Learning goals are listed for each Domain/Topic. Each individual goal includes Mastery of Learning Goals, Question Stems, along with a sample activity or assessment question.

Each grade level team should decide upon the particular sequence of proficiency scale usage, taking into consideration their student population, available and shared materials, and physical plant resources within the school, the concurrent curriculum of Social Studies and other related disciplines, and the anticipated rhythms of the upcoming school year.

The scales thus provide an opportunity for substantive collaboration and begin an ongoing dialogue that will encourage sharing best practices, curricular modification, problem-solving and circumstantial troubleshooting throughout the year.

EXAMPLE

YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME HERE Literacy Guide   Pre K

Grade Level

GRADE: Pre K Q:1

Topic Proficiency Scale
Domain: Language and Literacy Communications
Topic: Expressive Language

Numerical levels of mastery achieved, 0-4

4.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals and my understanding goes beyond the grade level target.

COMPLEX

3.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals.

☐ C1: Tells a simple personal narrative, focusing on favorite or most memorable parts

Higher level learning goals

☐ C2: Shares information about experiences, people, places and things in sequence

2.5 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals plus some of the Complex Learning Goals.

Each goal, complex or simple (C# or S#) is an **identified power standard.**

SIMPLE

2.0 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals.

☐ S1: Follows simple directions involving one or two stems

☐ S2: Uses short sentences to share information about people, places and things

Foundational goals, typically low level thinking skills

☐ S3: Uses precise descriptive language such as adverbs and adjectives

Academic Vocabulary: N/A

1.0 I know some of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.5 I know only one of the Simple Learning Goals.

Proficiency scales can be customized to align with your state and district standards.

0.0 No evidence of knowing the Learning Goals.

EXAMPLE, CONT.

Each complex and simple goal is unpacked on the following pages.

Also known as student objectives, this describes what students should be able to do at the end of the lesson.

Questions to ask your students throughout the lesson.

Sample activities or assessment questions are listed here.

Success Criteria
Topic: Expressive Language

COMPLEX	MASTERY OF LEARNING GOALS
☐ C1: Tells a simple personal narrative, focusing on favorite or most memorable parts	Students will: • Tell a simple story of an experience they have had • Tell what their favorite part was • Tell what they remember the most • Speak in complete sentences

Question Stems: Tells a simple personal narrative, focusing on favorite or most memorable parts.

- Tell me about….
- What was your favorite part?
- Why was that your favorite?
- When did that happen?

Example: Tells a simple personal narrative, focusing on favorite or most memorable parts.

Share Time-

Ask student to share about an important or exciting event in their life. Focus on using complete sentences and adding details such as their favorite part and why.

COMPLEX	MASTERY OF LEARNING GOALS
☐ C2: Shares information about experiences, people, places and things in sequence	Students will: • Use phrases and sentences to share about experiences, people, places and things • Tell about experiences in sequence • Use descriptive words when describing the experiences, people, places and things. • Begin to use a variety of word forms (past tense, future tense, plurals, pronouns, or possessives.

Question Stems: Shares information about experiences, people, places and things in sequence.

- Tell me about a place you went.
- What do you do when you wake up in the morning?

Topic Proficiency Scale
Domain: 21st Century Skills
Topic: Habits of Mind and Work

4.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals. Understanding goes beyond the grade level target.
Student is able to apply effective work habits and explain how they support personal educational goals. Student also demonstrates understanding of how individual habits of mind and work contribute to achievement of classroom community objectives.

COMPLEX
3.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals.
C1: Collaborates effectively in a range of partner/group activities:
• Setting specific goals and deadlines for group tasks.
• Responding with specific questions on the topic, text or task being discussed.
• Following classroom expectations for collaboration.

C2: Working with teacher, cultivates the characteristics of a growth mindset when applying work and study habits:
• Showing a positive attitude toward classroom activities as a means to grow learning potential.
• Seeking input from others (fellow students and teacher) when stuck.
• Responding to feedback and setbacks by applying what is learned from mistakes.

2.5 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals plus some of the Complex Learning Goals.

SIMPLE

2.0 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals.

S1: Knowing and following the expectations of collaboration:
• Engaging in the task and remaining focused.
• Actively participating in problem-solving.
• Effectively preparing for tasks.
• Self-monitoring side conversations.

S2: Using **discussion question stem phrases** appropriately, such as:
• I agree with...
• I disagree because...
• I want to add...
• Could you explain...
• Could you repeat...
• I have a question about…
• My evidence is...

S3: I complete class work consistently.

1.0 I know **some** of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.5 I know **only one** of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.0 I show **no** evidence of knowing the Learning Goals.

Topic Proficiency Scale
Domain: Speaking & Listening
Topic: Comprehension and Collaboration Expectations

4.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals and my understanding goes beyond the grade level target.

COMPLEX
3.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals.

Academic Vocabulary: mediate   pose

C1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher- led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly, **in a manner that consistently advances whole-community learning progress**.

C2: Cooperatively establish rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

C3: Pose and respond to specific questions with relevant detail, making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

C4: Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection, paraphrasing and making comparative connections.

C5: Cooperate, mediate and problem solve to make decisions as appropriate for productive group discussion.

C6: Outline a speaker's argument, specific claims, **and intended audience,** distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

2.5 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals plus some of the Complex Learning Goals.

SIMPLE
2.0 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals.

Academic Vocabulary: collaborative

S1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with a broad range of co- participants on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

S2: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; use that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

S3: Follow rules for discussions, stick to specific time goals and deadlines, and take on individual roles as assigned.

S4: Respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

S5: Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

S6: Cooperate and help problem solve to make decisions as appropriate for productive group discussion.

S7: Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

1.0 I know some of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.5 I know **only one** of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.0 No evidence of knowing the Learning Goals.

Topic Proficiency Scale
Domain: Literary Analysis
Topic: Informative/Explanatory

4.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals. My understanding goes beyond the grade level target.

COMPLEX
3.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals.

Academic Vocabulary: figurative   connotative   technical

C1: Describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced and developed in a text through language. I can identify relevant figurative, connotative and/or technical words and phrases.

C2: Explain how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section develops the main ideas in a text, and how it fits into the text's overall structure.

C3: Show understanding of the purpose of a text and how its intended audience influences the structure, word choices and central ideas conveyed by its author.

C4: Choose and organize information presented in different formats (e.g. a video, a graphic table, a series of photographs) as well as in words to develop a complex understanding of a topic or issue.

C5: Use information I have gathered to demonstrate how information given from a variety of sources on the *same* topic can be similar and/or different, depending on the purpose of the text.

C6: Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events**, including events related to American Indians**, with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

C7: Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, separating claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not, in order to determine a text's informational value.

C8: Draft (plan, edit, revise) informative/explanatory texts to convey ideas, concepts, and information.

2.5 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals plus some of the Complex Learning Goals.

SIMPLE
2.0 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals.

Academic Vocabulary: relevant   explicit   inferred

S1: Identify and describe key individuals, events, or ideas in a text, using evidence from the text to support my ideas.

S2: Know the difference between explicit evidence and inferred evidence.

S3: Identify the central idea in text, and can summarize it without including my personal opinion or judgement.

S4: Use tools such as a graphic organizer to help identify and sort different information, on the same topic, that is presented in different places in a text.

S5: Determine whether different details are relevant to the development of ideas in a text.

S6: Use the information I have gathered and organized to compare one text's version of an event, person **or** idea to another text, and I can identify key similarities and differences, **including events related to American Indians**.

1.0 I know **some** of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.5 I know **only one** of the Simple Learning Goals.

0.0 I show no evidence of knowing the Learning Goals.

Complex Learning Goals Success Criteria
Topic: Informative/Explanatory

C1: Describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced and developed in a text through language. Identify relevant figurative, connotative and/or technical words and phrases.	Students will be able to read a text and explain how the individual, event, or idea is developed on in the text, citing and commenting on words and phrases to support their claim. Academic vocabulary appropriately identifying types of language is employed to clarify meaning and convey understanding of intentional word choice.
C2: Explain how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section develops the main ideas in a text, and how it fits into the text's overall structure.	Students will be able to read a text and explain the connections made between different sections of the text pertaining to a particular idea. Students will be able to show how specific sections of the text(s) develop different facets of an idea. Students will be able to view multiple informative text types and determine the structure of each text. Students will be able to describe the relationship between a given text's overall structure and its content.
C3: Show understanding of the purpose of a text and how its intended audience influences the structure, word choices and central ideas conveyed by its author.	Students will be able to determine the central idea(s) of a text, and theorize about the purpose(s) of a text based on their determination of the central idea(s). Students will be able to identify language elements that develop the central idea(s) of a text and consider their impact on the text's intended audience.
C4: Choose and organize information presented in different formats (e.g. a video, a graphic table, a series of photographs) as well as in words to develop a complex understanding of a topic or issue.	Students will be able to retrieve, organize and interpret information from traditional linear prose forms of informational text, as well as visual forms where language is paired with images and/or symbolic representations of information.

C5: Use information gathered to demonstrate how information given from a variety of sources on the *same* topic can be similar and/or different, depending on the purpose of the text.)	Students will able to compare different texts about the same subject matter, citing phrases representing each text's key elements, to demonstrate their understanding of how a text's purpose influences its content.
C6: Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events, including events related to the same topic, with that of another (e.g., a newspaper account of an event, and a personal memoir by a direct participant).	Students will be able to select and organize appropriate points for comparison between two texts. Students will be able to determine significant points of similarity and contrast between two texts' presentation of an idea or event. Students will be able to present their text comparison so that it represents each author's work effectively, and shows no personal bias toward one author's point of view over another in the comparison. Students will be able to note some factors that may have impacted each author's choice of details (e.g. audience, purpose, circumstance).
C7: Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, separating claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not, in order to determine a text's informational value.	Students will be able to determine the difference between claims and evidence (statements of agreed-upon fact) in a given text. Students will be able to identify various kinds of evidence provided in the text to support a claim. Students will be able to determine when a claim is made that is not supported by evidence in the text. Students will be able to determine when claims are supported by questionable evidence or reasoning in the text. Students will be able to assess a text's overall informational value based upon the relationship between its claims and evidence.

C8: Draft (plan, edit, revise) informative/explanatory texts to convey ideas, concepts, and information.	Students will be able to write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples. c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. e. Establish and maintain a formal style. f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

Topic Proficiency Scale
Domain: The Art of Reading and Writing
Topic: Word Choice and Meaning

4.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals. My understanding goes beyond the grade level target.

COMPLEX
3.0 I know all of the Simple and Complex Learning Goals.

C1: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases **describing argumentation and effective word choice.**
> **Demonstrate understanding by using domain-specific words and phrases to identify argumentative elements in published and student-composed texts.**
> **Demonstrate understanding by identifying and commenting on effective word choices in published and student- composed texts.**

C2: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
> Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *audience, auditory, audible*).
> Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, **to research the etymology and historical uses of a word or phrase. (My addition)**
> **Compare different reference sources for differences in representation of word meaning, etymology and/or historical use. (My addition)**

C3: Demonstrate understanding of idioms, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings **to extend word consciousness.**
> Interpret idiomatic phrases in context to demonstrate **understanding of their literal meaning**.
> **Demonstrate applied understanding through selection and application of appropriate idiomatic word and phrase choices in written tasks. (My addition)**
> **Demonstrate understanding of connotation and denotations through selection and application of appropriately nuanced word choices in written tasks. (My addition)**

2.5 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals plus some of the Complex Learning Goals.

SIMPLE
2.0 I know all of the Simple Learning Goals.

S1: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
Learn basic terms of argumentation (e.g. claim, subclaim, evidence, reasoning) and their use in identifying parts of an argument.
      Apply terms in oral and written responses to selected fiction and informational texts.

S2: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 6 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
      Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including **idiomatic**, connotative and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning
      Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Use common, grade-appropriate roots and stems as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *audience*, *auditory*, *audible*).
      Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word, determine or clarify its precise meaning, and/or identify it as a part of speech.
      Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

S3: Demonstrate understanding of **idiom,** word relationships, and nuances in word meanings **to extend word consciousness.**
      Interpret basic figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context **to demonstrate understanding of idiomatic language.**
      Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., cause/effect, part/whole, item/category) to better understand each of the words.

1.0 I know some of the Simple Learning Goals.

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0.5 I know **only one** of the Simple Learning Goals.
0.0 I show no evidence of knowing the Learning Goals.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Katherine McKnight is a dynamic presenter, dedicated teacher, and award-winning author. She began her career in education over 30 years ago as a middle school and high school English and social studies teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. In addition to speaking at professional development conferences, she is a regular consultant in schools and classrooms in the United States and Europe.

Dr. McKnight has served as a Distinguished Professor of Research at National Louis University. She is the founder of Engaging Learners, an educational company built around her successful Literacy & Learning Center™ model. Her work in educational leadership, literacy and student skill development has resulted in unprecedented academic achievement in many struggling schools.

Katie has received several awards for her publications and teaching at the university level. She has authored 18 books that support educational strategies to engage all learners. Her titles include the best-selling *The Teacher's Big Book of Graphic Organizers: 100 Reproducible Organizers that Help Kids with Reading, Writing, and the Content Areas*, winner of the 2013 Teachers' Choice Award. She's also written *The Second City Guide to Improv in the Classroom*; *Teaching Writing in the Inclusive Classroom*; *The Elementary Teacher's Big Book of Graphic Organizers*; *Literacy & Learning Centers™ for the Big Kids: Building Literacy Skills and Content Knowledge*; and *Strategies to Support Struggling Adolescent Readers*.