

CORE Academic Quarterly



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- CA English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework pg 7
- Mathematical Discourse: From Question Asking to Question Answering pg 4
- Capacity Building Within Math Teams pg 6
- CORE Leadership Corner pg 7

CORE Reading Expert

California's Recently Adopted English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework Helps Translate Common Core Standards to a Coherent and Sequenced Curriculum for All Students

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The Common Core State Standards express what students should master, but they are not a curriculum. The work of creating a local curricular framework, which informs the sequence and breadth of instruction (usually referred to as a scope and sequence), is complex. The absence of such efforts to move from the standards themselves to a coherent and sequenced curriculum will hamper many states and local district common core implementation efforts. Standards themselves do not answer questions such as how much instructional time should be invested in helping students master a particular skill, what strategies will be effective, what is the progression of learning and how should it be assessed, what to do for struggling students, and how instruction correlates with previous units. Luckily, the new California English Language Arts/English Language Development framework (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/elaldfrmwrksbeadopted.asp>) offers sound advice on how to progress from standards to a coherent instructional program that addresses the question of access to the Common Core for all students.



Register now for *Reading Between the Lines: A Two-Day Common Core Seminar* Co-Sponsored by CORE and Atlanta Public Schools with Tim Shanahan, Ph.D.

**March 2–3, 2015
 Hyatt Regency Atlanta
 Atlanta, GA**

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The Common Core State Standards and other state standards require that students learn to closely read more challenging texts. Yet the majority of teachers still teach with instructional level texts. Attendees will leave with specific techniques to make challenging text comprehensible and will learn an instructional mode for close reading to make teaching more effective and increase student learning.

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California's Recently Adopted English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework (cont.)

Integration of English Language Arts (ELA) and English Language Development (ELD)

One of the unique aspects of the California framework is the full integration of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA English Language Development Standards (for English learners), both adopted by the California State Board of Education. These standards provide year-end outcome statements for student knowledge and abilities and guide instructional planning and observation of student progress. The integration of ELA/ELD, which was made easier in California because the main ELD development group headed by Dr. Kenji Hakuta of Stanford based its standards on the Common Core, addressed what EL students would need to succeed in learning the Common Core and offered specific suggestions on how to accomplish that goal. The framework provides examples of classroom practices in which ELD teachers, ELA teachers and content area teachers collaborate to provide equal access to the rigorous instruction required by the CCSS. The document addresses the need for both designated ELD instruction (a special time) and full integration of English language support in ELA and content-area classes, and includes a full discussion of assessment of English learners.

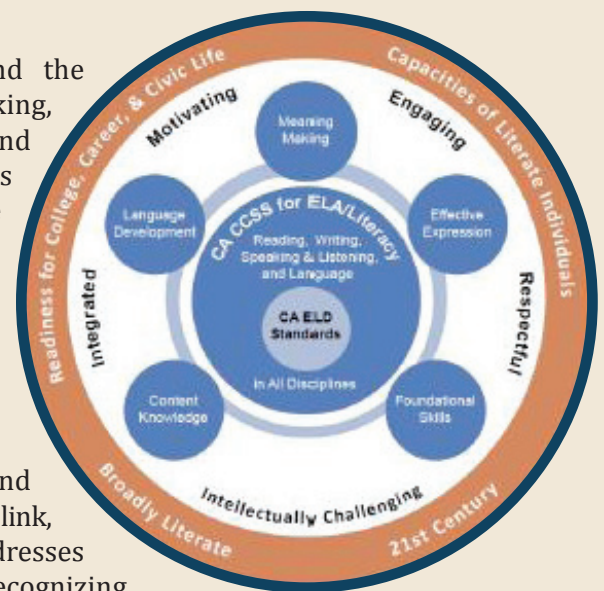
Five Major Organizing Themes

California's five key organizing themes of the standards and the Framework are meant to influence instruction: meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational skills. These five themes help organize the standards into useful areas of instruction. They should be taught where possible in an integrated fashion. All are about developing the ability to understand text and apply knowledge and reflect the transition to a more active, engaging classroom envisioned by the CCSS. The five themes are discussed in general in Chapter 2 and become the organizing components for the grade level clusters in Chapters 3–7.

The **foundational skills** theme, which is further explicated and summarized in a white paper on foundation skills cited in the following link, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/documents/foundskillswhitepaper.pdf>, addresses ways teachers support students to get meaning from quickly recognizing printed words already in the student's vocabulary—a major task of instruction from mid-kindergarten through mid-second grade. The framework provides guidance on helping children learn to decode in order to become automatic with a growing number of words during these early years and develop fluency. It suggests using a linguistic progression of sound/spelling correspondences from easier and transparent to the more complex ones (because of the complex and nontransparent nature of English linguistics). The framework recommends decodable text to be read by the student at the beginning, which should match and provide practice in the sound/spelling correspondences which have been taught. As students become sufficiently adept at recognizing enough words and letter/sound combinations to comfortably read them, students make the transition to trade books. Parallel to this decoding strand of instruction is a rich oral-reading and discussion program.

The **language development theme** addresses how to support students in understanding a growing number of vocabulary words, learning academic language, and negotiating syntactical complexity. It offers advice on how to organize a research-based curriculum in these areas.

The **meaning making theme** aims to help students infer, connect, and use strategies such as close reading or metacognitive techniques to help understand both literature (including novels, biographies, essays, plays, and poems) and discipline-based informational text.



California's Recently Adopted English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework (cont.)

The **content knowledge theme** advises how to develop student background knowledge, provide support and motivation for the discipline areas such as biographies of key figures and events in history or science, and assist students in tackling the different text structures in the disciplines all of which improve comprehension.

The **effective expression theme** provides suggestions on deepening understanding by having students write, argue, or discuss in argumentative, explanatory/informative, and narrative styles. This theme also includes writing and speaking conventions and spelling.

Each of these themes encourages an active, engaging curriculum with multiple opportunities for students to apply what they are learning in a variety of ways. The framework is chock-full of exemplars of this type of instruction by incorporating numerous vignettes and snapshots of classroom strands and examples of the connection to content areas.

The framework has separate chapters for Transitional Kindergarten through Grade 2, Grades 3–5, Grades 6–8, and high school. Each is organized around these five themes. Foundation skills, which eventually cover syllabication, morphemic analysis, and fluency, are included in every grade span through high school with the recognition that teachers at all levels must be aware of foundational skills to provide support and intervention strategies, when necessary, at later grades. The framework also has chapters on formative assessment, interventions and equity, criteria for adopting materials, professional learning and leadership, and twenty-first-century learning.

The assessment chapter emphasizes the role and provides guidance for immediate and short-term formative assessment and the intervention and equity chapter stresses the importance of intervention (RtI and multi-tiered instruction) for all students who are below benchmark to prevent failure. The professional learning chapter underscores the crucial importance of professional development and collaboration across disciplines, team building and learning communities, continuous improvement, and the leadership structures necessary for system-wide support in the implementation of the active and engaging classroom instruction envisioned by the common core standards and this framework. The framework contains multiple exemplars and vignettes as a guide to professional learning.

Appendix A of the California Framework written by one of the authors of this commentary, Carol Jago, deals with the important role of literature in the CCCS. The appendix also addresses the issue of the level of text complexity students should encounter and suggestions for accessing complex text for all students. There are suggestions and links to compendiums of the best literature and informational text by discipline. The Framework has taken a balanced approach that some material should be at independent and instructional reading levels, and some text should be challenging but supported through scaffolded instruction.

We hope this framework will help provide useful assistance in the nationwide effort to improve the quality of instruction for all children.

Recommended Reading

Tim Shanahan's blog presents a series of informative articles. The following article describes issues pertaining to Guided Reading and implementing the instructional principles underlying the Common Core State Standards:

<http://www.shanahanonliteracy.com/search/label/Guided%20reading>

This next article addresses issues of teaching with challenging text and the idea of using a variety of text levels in the classroom:

<http://www.shanahanonliteracy.com/search/label/challenging%20text>

Mathematical Discourse: From Question Asking to Question Answering

by Dean Ballard, CORE Mathematics Director



This fall I presented a session with the above title at two National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) regional conferences (Indianapolis and Richmond). The impetus for this session was the considerable anecdotal evidence building from my own school site visits and those of our consultants regarding the challenges of facilitating meaningful discourse in math classrooms. Not only is coming up with good questions around mathematical reasoning difficult for many teachers, but getting students to do anything with these questions is equally, if not more, difficult. Considering the critical role mathematical discourse plays in accomplishing the CCSSM Standards for Mathematical Practice and in turn the learning of the content standards, bridging the gap between asking good questions and getting students to answer the questions meaningfully is of utmost importance. In fact, if teachers have no skills, techniques, or plans for how to manage discourse and process the discourse, asking deeper-level questions may serve no purpose for many students.

Below is an outline of the ideas presented in these NCTM sessions. Some information may be new for you or at the very least may confirm or emphasize thoughts or practices you have in place. Feel free to email me at dballard@corelearn.com with questions, requests for clarification, or additional ideas you have to share.

Initiate, Manage, and Connect and Conclude Discourse

I. Initiate Discourse: Foundation and Formation

- A. FOUNDATION: Get students ready to engage in dialogue (knowledge base, attitude, setting, expectations, etc.).
 1. Make sure required prior knowledge is in place.
 2. Build productive struggle on success with being productive (successful practice or application of concepts and skills).
 3. Let students know what is expected.
- B. FORMATION: Give students something worthwhile to think and talk about.
 1. Assign “rich tasks.”
 2. Ask engaging and challenging questions. For example:
 - Simply ask “Why?” or “Why/how does this make sense?”
 - Ask compare/contrast, agree/disagree, and why, what if, how does this connect to, etc. type questions.
 3. Provide think and discussion time. Use a variety of discussion structures (e.g., turn-and-talk, think-pair-share, and think-write-pair-share).
 4. Begin with small expectations in terms of discussion time and provide time frames for students.

II. Manage Discourse: Know When to Hold Them and Know When to Scaffold Them

- A. First manage the classroom, then manage the discourse.
- B. Recognize that engaging in meaningful discourse is a progression.
- C. Always walk and work the room. Limit time with each group so you can continue to monitor all groups.
- D. KNOW WHEN TO HOLD THEM: Let conversations flow without interference, or refuse to provide help when you know they just need to press on a little further themselves. Provide encouragement.
- E. KNOW WHEN TO SCAFFOLD THEM: Balance roles of sage on the stage and guide on the side. You may need to clarify, provide background information, or a lead step in the right direction, such as providing a sentence frame that gets students started in the right direction (e.g., “I chose the math operation of _____ because _____.”), or pruning the task a little to make it manageable, and/or ask probing questions that guide student thinking. Don’t do all the thinking for them.

Mathematical Discourse: From Question Asking to Question Answering (cont.)

III. Connect and Conclude Discourse: Selection and Connection

- A. SELECTION: Choose what will be shared from student work.
 1. Select work to be shared based on specific ideas that you want all students to think about.
 2. Use “cold call” to encourage all students to be ready to share.
- B. CONNECTION: Connect, correct, clarify.
 1. Correct misconceptions as needed. Invite students into this process.
 2. Build on student ideas whenever possible. Connect student ideas or ask students to connect ideas that are shared. (Repeat, revise, restate, and add-on strategies.)
 3. Clarify and validate correct mathematical thinking. Connect ideas, methods, thinking, and/or conclusions to the day’s learning objective(s).

Math Resources

- **Port Angeles School District math problems.** These problems are designed to promote communication of mathematical thinking. They are also good problems for promoting the Standards for Mathematical Practice in the Common Core. According to the website,

Problems presented in this website are recommended for student use to communicate (in written form) understanding of math content. They are organized by grade level followed by strands: numbers, measurement, geometry, algebra, data (statistics/probability), logic, and strategies. These problems may be printed and used for educational purposes.

<http://www.portangelesschools.org/students/wasl-math-index.html>

- **Student Role Cards for the Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP).** These cards are handed to students working in groups. One or two cards can be given to one or two students within a group for that day for that student to take the lead in getting the group to address the SMP. The cards should be matched to the task groups are working on; thus, the same one or two cards may be given to each group.

http://jonathanwray.com/smp_group_roles_MWaggoner.pdf

- **Standards for Mathematical Practice (SMP) Look-fors.** This is a checklist of look-fors in the classroom of student actions related to each SMP and teacher actions that promote students engaging in each SMP.

<http://mathspecialists.org/tools/ems&tISFMPStudentTeacherLookFors.pdf>

- **Standards of Student Practice in Mathematics Proficiency Matrix and Instructional Implementation Sequence** (from Dr. Ted H. Hull, Dr. Don S. Balka, and Ruth Harbin Miles). The matrix in the first article shows a progression of engagement in each Standard for Mathematical Practice (SMP) for students, and the second article provides ideas for sequencing techniques that help promote fuller engagement in the SMPs. Both articles can be found on the website below.

<http://mathleadership.com/ccss.html>

Capacity Building Within Math Teams

by Dean Ballard, CORE Mathematics Director

The arrival of the third and final year for many of CORE's Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools in the SIG grant has focused some of these schools on thinking more seriously about long-term sustainable practices for improving instruction. CORE's capacity-building model, which uses the I Do, We Do, You Do technique with instructional leaders and teachers, provides the template for us to build capacity and sustainability.

I would like to share a recent experience putting this model into practice at a non-BIE school, Oak Harbor. Oak Harbor has professional learning communities (PLCs) already in place; however, they desire to see their PLCs function more effectively in terms of analyzing each teacher's instruction and providing helpful collegial suggestions. To help them in the process, we recommend having two roving subs available that would allow two teachers in the morning and two other teachers in the afternoon to be released from their classes and accompany the instructional coach and myself on classroom observations and debriefs. The overall process we followed is described below.

1. Preplan with observers the focus of the observations: What area(s) of instruction are we specifically looking to work on helping each other improve?
2. Observe 20–30 minutes of a math lesson together.
3. Debrief with the observers for 20–30 minutes, discussing what we saw that was commendable (“glows”), what we saw that needed work (“grows”), and what suggestions we could make to help in needed areas.
4. Debrief as a group with the observed teacher using the following protocol:
 - a. The observed teacher speaks first about the lesson—what he/she thought worked and what needed improvement. Observers can ask clarifying questions only.
 - b. Observers take turns sharing “glows” and “grows” being very specific about where we each saw the lesson needing help. The observed teacher can ask clarifying questions only.
5. All engage in a discussion about the lesson and ideas for improving key areas of the lesson related to the specific focus of the observation.



This process was very well received. It provided several key benefits for the Oak Harbor math team:

- The teachers who were observed received direct feedback on the lesson taught with a focus on an agreed-upon area of need in their instruction.
- The observing teachers were able to reflect on the lesson observed, think about similarities and differences with their own lessons, and glean ideas to implement in their own lessons without having to be on the spot themselves as the observed teacher.
- The instructional coach and the teachers learned a process they can follow to greater or lesser degrees depending on opportunities for observing each other teach.

CORE Leadership Corner: Resources for Implementing an RtI Framework in Secondary Schools

With the implementation of the Common Core State Standards ramping up this year, it is imperative that schools and districts employ a robust Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. Over a decade's worth of research has supported implementing an RtI model, especially at the early grades, to address the needs of students who are not achieving grade-level expectations. While we know intuitively and concretely from research that the earlier intervention is deployed, the better, there is growing research evidence to support implementing a robust RtI framework at the secondary level. Implementing an RtI model at the secondary level has its challenges, considering the complexities of scheduling, time, motivation, and competing initiatives in the secondary environment. However, there are a growing number of examples where it is being done well.

The following two websites can provide a wealth of information to those who are beginning implementation of an RtI plan or are looking to refine their current plan.

1. The National Center for RtI sponsored by American Institutes of Research (AIR) (<http://www.rti4success.org>) provides overviews of the various components of RtI, assessment tool charts, and training modules developed for viewing and also for delivery as training to school staffs, complete with speaker notes and PowerPoint slides. Look under the Resources tab for these and other resources.
2. The RtI Action Network sponsored by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (<http://www.rtinetwork.org>) provides overviews of the components of RtI, a step-by-step process for planning, as well as many informative articles. Two articles from this website stand out as relevant to leaders:
 - a. "RtI Leadership That Works" (<http://www.rtinetwork.org/getstarted/buildsupport/rti-leadership-that-works>): This article provides insight into Stephen Covey's (1991) four roles of leadership—modeling, pathfinding, aligning, and empowering—as they pertain to educational leadership within an RtI framework.
 - b. "RtI in Secondary Schools" (<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/rti-in-secondary-schools/response-to-intervention-in-secondary-schools>): This article provides insight into the complexities of implementing an RtI framework at the secondary level and addresses the issues involved with developing structures to deliver intervention within middle and high schools in ways that are palatable to adolescents.

An additional resource can be found in the Spring 2012 issue of *Perspectives*, the quarterly journal published by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). This issue's theme is the struggling adolescent reader. While all the articles are relevant and high quality, two stand out in particular as "must reads." The first article, "What Is the Best Choice for Scheduling Remedial Reading Classes at the Middle School Level?" reviews the current research on various secondary literacy intervention configurations. The chief conclusions from the research are that students who receive a supplemental intervention in addition to their grade-level English/language arts class, rather than forfeiting all or a portion of the grade-level ELA time, tend to do better on reading measures, including comprehension. This option requires students to miss out on at least one elective course, which can be a controversial option. The second article, "One Middle School's Journey," chronicles the six-year process of how one low-performing middle school changed its literacy practices.

You can find information for how to order a copy of the Spring 2012 issue of *Perspectives* at the following web address: <http://www.interdys.org/Perspectives.htm>.



About CORE

CORE serves as a trusted advisor at all levels of preK–12 education, working collaboratively with educators to support literacy and math achievement growth for all students. Our implementation support services and products help our customers build their own capacity for effective instruction by laying a foundation of research-based knowledge, supporting the use of proven tools, and developing leadership. As an organization committed to integrity, excellence, and service, we believe that with informed school and district administrators, expert teaching, and well-implemented programs, all students can become proficient academically. For more information about CORE, please visit our website at www.corelearn.com.