Capture the Core

Fourth Grade

Prototype Common Core Assessment Items Are Out and Ready for Review

Sneaking a Peek

Item and task prototypes have recently been released from PARCC, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. This is the multi state consortium which will be guiding the creation of the Common Core Assessments that will replace the current ISAT tests in 2014 - 2015. The online prototypes found on the PARCC website are designed to guide educators on the importance of content of the standards in the future technology-based assessments.

What follows is an excerpt from the PARCC website concerning the released items.

PARCC Item and Task Prototypes

The primary purpose of sharing item and task prototypes is to provide information and to support educators as they transition to the CCSS and the PARCC assessments. The dynamic, online prototypes presented on the PARCC website are designed to shine a light on important elements of the CCSS and to show how critical content in the standards may be manifested on PARCC's next-generation, technology-based assessments.

The PARCC sample items and tasks can and should be viewed as one of the many types of materials educators can use during the transition to the CCSS and PARCC.

In addition to educators, students and parents may also find the sample items and tasks to be a useful resource for learning more about the CCSS and how state assessments may appear in the future.

The prototypes provided to date represent just a beginning to the complement of items and tasks that will be shared over time to represent the full range of assessment tasks that will be included on actual PARCC assessments beginning in 2014-2015. Additional prototypes and rubrics will be added over the coming months to paint a more complete picture of the PARCC assessment design in each content area and grade level

To view the sample items, go to: http://www.parcconline.org/ and click on Item and Task Prototypes. The sample links are about half way down the page.

> **The PARCC sample items and tasks can and should be viewed as one of the many types of materials educators can use during the transition to the CCSS and PARCC.**
>
> **-parcconline.org**

ELA News: More about 50-50 Informational and Literature Texts

Student Achievement Partners at www.achievethecore.org has created tools to assist in the implementation process for CCSS. The following text taken from that site explains the shift of including more informational text, and the reasoning behind that shift.

"Much of our knowledge base comes from informational text. Informational text makes up the vast majority of required reading in college/workplace (80%). Informational text is harder for students to comprehend than narrative text. Yet students are asked to read very little of it in elementary and middle school (7-15%).

Building knowledge through content rich nonfiction plays an essential role in literacy and in the standards. In K-5, fulfilling the standards requires a 50-50 balance between informational and literary reading. Informational reading primarily includes content rich nonfiction in history/social studies, science and the arts; the K-5 Standards strongly recommend that students build coherent general knowledge both within each year and across years."

CCSS publisher criteria has been updated recently and suggests the following: In the last few years, informational texts that are rich and accessible to primary and middle grades are available although many more such texts are needed.

The standards call for elementary curriculum materials to be recalibrated to reflect a mix of 50 percent literary and 50 percent informational text, including reading in ELA, science, social studies, and the arts. Achieving the appropriate balance between literary and informational text in the next generation of materials requires a significant shift in early literacy materials and instructional time so that scientific and historical text are given the same time and weight as literary text. In addition, to develop reading comprehension for all readers, as well as build vocabulary, the selected informational texts should build a coherent body of knowledge both within and across grades.

Source: www.corestandards.org

Informational Text Strategy for Fourth Grade

Try this strategy in any 4th grade classroom for use with informational text to support your teaching of RI.4.2.—*Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text* . Additional ideas can be found at http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pdf/ela-teach-strat-k-5.pdf

Have students read a page of nonfiction text selected by the teacher. The teacher initially presents the main idea. Students must find statements of text-based evidence to support the main idea. An adaptation is to provide small groups of students with four or five main ideas from the same text. Students then locate a statement or two of text-based evidence to support each main idea. Once students finish finding proof to support the main ideas, they can summarize the text by sharing their proof.

Source: www.isbe.net/common_core/pdf/ela-teach-strat-k-5.pdf (pg. 42)

"**The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.**"
--Mark Van Doren

Digital Literacy is embedded throughout the Common Core State Standards. Look at the following link for more information on how to incorporate technology in your lessons.

www.thescriptorium.net: This site allows students to create a magazine and publish ideas within their class or school. Allow fourth graders to create a column regarding a science or social studies topic they are studying. Publish a magazine with a variety of articles/columns for a school wide e-zine.

*Watch for more websites and information to follow in this section in the coming months.*

Focus on Standard for Mathematical Practice 1

The first Practice Standard, **Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them**, requires students to start a problem by looking for entry points and explaining to themselves the meaning of the problems. Students need to make conjectures, plan a pathway (rather than jumping in), monitor their progress and change course when necessary. When students finish a problem they need to check using a different method or representation (consider equations, verbal descriptions, tables, graphs or diagrams) and then ask themselves,

Does this answer make sense?

Proficient students should also understand the approaches of others and be able to identify correspondences between different approaches.
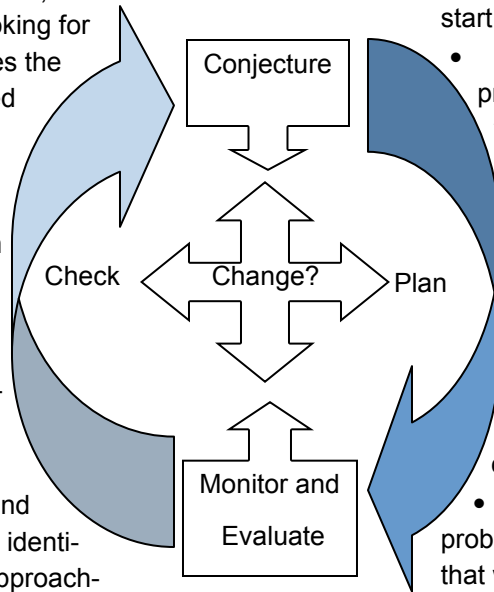
How do I encourage MP1?

- Ask what information they need and how to start.
- Provide ample wait time through out a problem allowing students to go down a variety of paths.
- Have students reflect on how a problem relates to previous work.
- Ask students to construct their own solution pathway rather than following a provided one.
- Employ problems involving ideas that are currently at the forefront of the student's developing mathematical knowledge.
- Provide students the answer to a problem and ask them to create a strategy that would lead to that answer.

Diagram: Conjecture → Plan → Monitor and Evaluate → Check, with "Change?" at the center.

Focus on Standard for Mathematical Practice 2

The second Practice Standard, **Reason abstractly and quantitatively**, requires students to make sense of quantities and relationships in problem situations. Mathematically proficient students should decontextualize and contextualize.

Decontextualizing is taking necessary information from a given situation, representing it symbolically and treating these symbols as if they have a life of their own.

Contextualizing is pausing during the manipulation process to probe into the meaning of the symbols. Students should be able to create a coherent representation, consider units, and attend to the meaning of quantities.

How do I encourage MP2?

- Have students justify their answer using a different representation.
- Have students label their answers.
- Have students write a real-life example.
- Have students explain their thinking.
- Provide students with contextual problems in which they can gain insight by relating the mathematical expressions to a given context.

> **It is time to recognize that standards are not just promises to our children, but promises we intend to keep.**
>
> - CCSSM, p. 5

Key Content Changes for 4th Grade

Grade 4 students:

- Solve multi-step word problems posed with whole numbers and having whole-number answers using the four operations, including problems in which remainders must be interpreted. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding. **4.OA.3**

Standards **4.NF.3 and 4.NF.4** represent an important step in the multi-grade progression for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions. [Grade 4 expectations limited to fractions with denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 100.]

In Geometry, students describe, analyze, compare, and classify two-dimensional shapes. By building, drawing, and analyzing these shapes, students deepen understanding of properties for use in solving symmetry problems.

Cultivating thriving learning environments that pro-mote the dignity and foster the well-being of students, educators, and communities.

WELCOME, to your second full month of the school year. And thank you, for making time to read Capture the Core despite the many demands of teaching class in full swing!

In last month's issue, you were introduced to the state-wide effort to assist each district and school in building a *Comprehensive System of Learning Supports* that reduces barriers to teaching and learning and continuously engages and re-engages students in the learning process. Sounds ideal, doesn't it? But, how does it happen?

A comprehensive approach works within a framework of district, school, and classroom *systems* designed to create optimal Conditions for Learning, and YOU are a part of this.

Research (and teachers' good sense) point to Conditions for Learning as fundamental to student achievement. Conditions for Learning are included among the best practice indicators representing Eight Essential Elements of Effective Education within the Illinois Continuous School Improvement Model. These indicators are listed in the *Rising Star on the Illinois Interactive Report Card* system.

Regardless of what improvement model is used in your school and district, you can help ensure that Conditions for Learning (CL) indicators remain an important part of the school improvement dialogue. How do you do this?

1. Become familiar with Conditions for Learning indicators and the research that backs them. Find a list and links at www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/conditions.htm.

2. Create awareness in your school, among colleagues and in relation to your school improvement efforts.

3. Stay tuned to the Learning Supports Web page at www.isbe.net/learningsupports for resources and training opportunities related to Conditions for Learning.

Thank YOU for striving for optimal Conditions for Learning!

Classroom Connections

This month, let's take a closer look at just one, but a very significant, Conditions for Learning indicator:

"The environment of the school (physical, social emotional, and behavioral) is safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning." *

Note that the learning environment, or school climate, includes so much more than physical surroundings! Research proves that the nature of *interactions* among people hugely impacts student and family engagement and therefore, student achievement.

As a classroom teacher, **you are the most important professional impacting your students' school experience**. Teachers often create positive environments intuitively, but we know that making our efforts **intentional** significantly improves outcomes.

How do you foster support, respect, and high expectations in your classroom? Now is the time to set and model behavioral norms, by applying the "three Cs":

Collaboratively develop. Invite your students to add thoughtful input when determining their class norms.

Clearly communicate. Norms require learning, as do academics. *Teach* and *model* with dignity and clarity.

Consistently reinforce. Acknowledge appropriate actions, correct inappropriate responses with dignity.

Learn more about school climate by clicking "CL7" at www.isbe.net/learningsupports/html/conditions.htm.

* Continuous School Improvement Connection: This best practice indicator is listed as a "Smart Start"

Helpful Resources

http://resourcesforhistoryteachers.wikispaces.com/ - features primary source, multicultural, and multimedia resources for teaching history in K-12 schools

http://www.parcconline.org/ - features the most up to date information on the progress of the assessments and the prototype items for CCSS.

http://illustrativemathematics.org/ - provides K-12 illustrations of the range and type of work students experience in Common Core and publishes tools to support implementation

www.isbe.net/learningsupports- includes Conditions for Learning indicators and an A-Z list of topics related to specific issues that create barriers to student learning.