

# Capture the Core

## Kindergarten

### 5 Things Every Teacher Should be Doing Now to Meet the Common Core State Standards

By: Lauren Davis, *Eye On Education's Senior Editor*

#### Lead high-level, authentic

**discussions.** Teachers should craft [good questions](#), and students should learn to cite textual evidence in their responses. For great ways to teach speaking and listening skills.



#### Focus on *process* over content.

That doesn't mean content is not important. It means teachers shouldn't ask students to memorize vocabulary words or facts; instead, they should engage students in the gathering-information and learning process. Also, it's a mistake to think you have to nail each standard, one by one. The standards are not meant to be taught via isolated, discreet tasks. In the real world, skills overlap, and they must overlap in the classroom, too.

#### Create assignments for real audiences and with real purpose.

Don't assign papers that are just for the teacher. Design projects with a real purpose, such as to solve a problem in your community. Have students present their findings to an authentic audience—online, in print, or in person. Students will benefit from these rich experiences and be more motivated to learn.

#### Teach argument, not persuasion.

According to [Appendix A of the CCSS](#), persuasive writing might “appeal to the audience’s self-interest, sense of identity, or emotions,” whereas a logical argument “convinces the audience because of the perceived merit and reasonableness of the claims and proofs offered rather than either the emotions the writing evokes in the audience or the character or credentials of the writer.”

Teach students how to gather logical evidence.

#### Assign increasingly difficult

**texts.** One way to increase text difficulty is to use text sets. For example, one teacher at the conference suggested combining *The Odyssey* with a Star Wars text and an NPR story on veterans and violence. Text sets increase engagement and help students make thoughtful connections.



A Publication of the Illinois State Board of Education Statewide System of Support Content Specialists

September 2012

“If you don’t know where you are headed, you will probably end up somewhere else.”

By: Douglas Eder

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# Key Areas of Instructional Focus in English Language Arts

## 1. **Balanced Literary and Informational Text:**

50% Literary Text

50% Informational Text

### Literary vs. Informational Text

Literary text is a narrative form of text and can be viewed as *fiction*, *nonfiction*, or *poetry*.

Fiction: *traditional literature*, *fantasy*, *science fiction*, *realistic fiction*, and *historical fiction*.

Nonfiction: *nature writing*, *travel writing*, *biographies*, *memoirs*, *essays*.

Informational text is a kind of nonfiction text that includes *exposition*; *argumentation* and *persuasive* text; and *procedural* text and *documents*.

2. **Text Complexity**—consider quantitative and qualitative measures of the text as well as the reader and task considerations.



3. **Text-Dependent Questions**—focus on higher level questioning connected to the text; focus on evidence based answers in rich discussions and writing

4. **Close reading**—Read shorter complex chunks of text with close attention; reread and look for evidence to support conclusions drawn from the text.

5. **Academic Vocabulary**—Teachers need to be alert to Tier 2 Words (i.e., fortunate, industrious, absurd) which are frequently encountered in complex texts and are applicable across disciplines.

6. **Writing Arguments**—Students need to take a stance in their writing and use evidence from sources to support their position/claim.

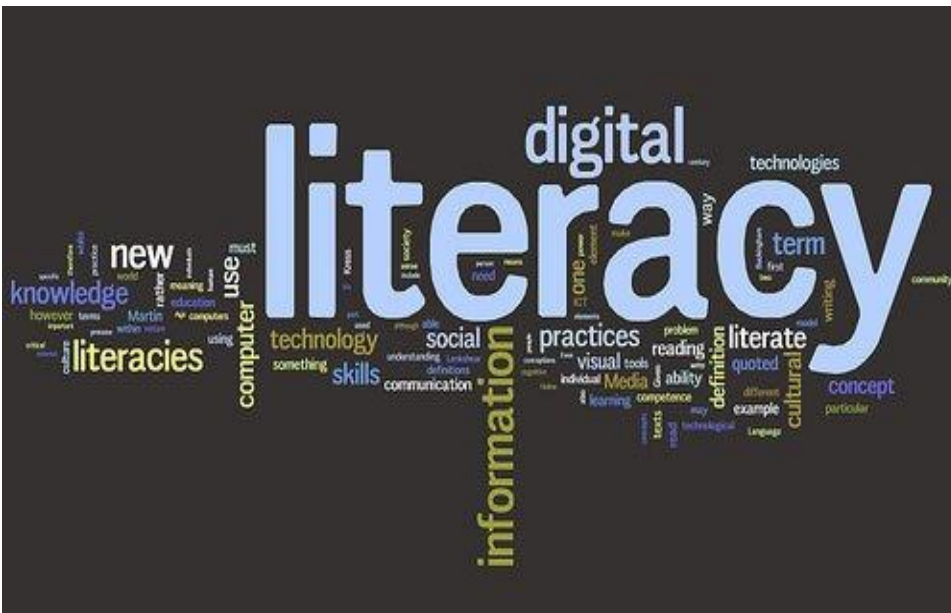
## Kindergarten Key Considerations

Kindergarten students are expected to engage in group reading activities that include key details, unknown words, author and illustrator roles, parts of a book, types of text, use of illustrations, and comparing the experiences of characters in familiar stories.

Kindergarten students are expected to demonstrate increasing awareness in foundational skills involving the understanding and organization of basic print features and concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency by reading emergent reader texts with purpose,

understanding and competency.

Writing standards focus on using a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to compose opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative pieces with guidance and support from adults. Students will also use digital tools to produce and publish.



**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.

<http://tilesig.wikispaces.com/Cool+Tools>

This site offers a list of tools and links to enhance literacy; sponsored by The Technology In Literacy Education, a Special Interest Group which is affiliated with the International Reading Association.

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

# Key Areas of Instructional Focus in Math

**1. Focus** – the push for mastery of a few key concepts at each grade rather than shallow repetition of the same material. To achieve this goal, priority of specific areas must be made so students reach a strong foundational and deep, transferable understanding.

*See the Critical Areas below.*

**2. Coherence** – thinking across grades and linking to topics within grades. Teachers connect learning within and across grades to build new understanding on to foundations of previous learning.



**3. Rigor** – the pursuit of conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency and application with equal intensity. Teachers present students with opportunities to demonstrate deep conceptual understanding of core mathematical concepts and apply them to new situations in addition to promoting an ability for speed and accuracy in calculations.

<http://www.achievethecore.org/downloads/Math%20Shifts%20and%20Major%20Work%20of%20Grade.pdf>

## Kindergarten Critical Areas of Mathematics

**In Kindergarten, instructional time should focus on two critical areas:**

1. Representing, relating, and operating on whole numbers, initially with sets of objects. (K.CC)

- Know the number names and count sequence
- Count to tell the number of objects
- Compare numbers

2. Describe shapes and space (K.G)

- Identify and describe shapes

More learning time in Kindergarten should be devoted to number than to other topics.

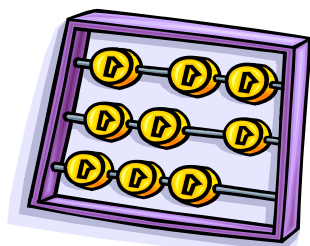
For more detailed information go to: <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/mathematics/kindergarten/introduction/>

“The essence of mathematics is not to make simple things complicated, but to make complicated things simple.”

- S. Gudder

## Mathematical Practice Standards

**How do you integrate the Mathematical Practice Standards into your lessons?**



1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

4. Model with mathematics.

5. Use appropriate tools strategically.

6. Attend to precision.

7. Look for and make use of structure.

8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

For more detailed information go to: <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/mathematics/introduction/standards-for-mathematical-practice/>



## What is a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports?

The implementation of rigorous and relevant learning goals can pose challenges, especially when considering the various issues that impact our students in their lives both inside and outside of school.

Greater awareness of the necessary conditions for learning and the barriers facing our students can lead to real improvements for students and educators.

By mapping and aligning all support programming into one system, a *Comprehensive System of Learning Supports*, schools and districts can promote optimal *conditions for learning and teaching*, such as:

- academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral competencies;
- positive school climate;
- engagement and re-engagement of students; and
- reduction of barriers (e.g. poverty, intolerance, and behavioral health concerns).

In short, the purpose of implementing a Learning Supports System is to cultivate thriving learning environments which promote dignity and foster the well-being of students, educators, and communities.

A state-level team of Learning Supports Specialists is currently integrating environmental pieces into Common Core strategy professional development along with mapping a professional development curriculum to assist educators in building skills in social, emotional, behavioral, and physical competencies.

## Ongoing/Formative Assessment

### What is Ongoing/Formative Assessment?

- It is to question rather than explain
- It is to listen rather than talk
- It is to assess for learning

### Why You Should Use Ongoing/Formative Assessment

- It supports the learning process
- It checks for understanding along the way
- It provides feedback for the teacher and the student
- It inspires students to improve
- It targets individual student learning
- It moves learning forward
- It gives students responsibility for their learning

“The important question is not how assessment is defined, but whether assessment information is used...”

- Palomba and Banta

## Helpful Resources

[www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) – Illinois State Board of Education – Under Learning Standards, click on Common Core Math and ELA. Take a look at the resources listed in the right column.

[www.isbe.net/learningsupports](http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports) – Learning Supports Resource information

[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org) – Access to all Common Core Standards and Appendices

[www.parcconline.org](http://www.parcconline.org) – Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers – Resources will be added for teacher use to prepare for the upcoming assessment in 2014-2015. i.e., Content Frameworks for Math and ELA

Visit [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) to download the newsletter

