FRAMING LITERACY AND LEARNING IN THE COMMON CORE ERA

Effective Classroom Interaction and School Organization for Preparing *English Learners* to be *College and Career Ready*

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Common Core 101
What Do We Know About the Common Core Standards?
Common Core State Standards

• CCSS have been officially adopted by 46 states
• Full Implementation 2013–2014 Academic Year
• Fueled National Debate
• Fueled by Misconceptions
• Need for Professional Development at all Levels
Common Core and Critical Consciousness

• Whose Idea?

• Whose Common Core Standards?

• Who Benefits?

• Who Potentially Gets Harmed?

• What Can We Do?
Educational Reform: New Standards

• Over the past three decades, several successive waves of education reform have built on the idea that strong and clear educational standards are central to efforts to improve the schooling achievement of students in order to turn around a crisis in U.S. education (Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan, 2008; McDermott, 2011).
Top–Down Educational Policy

• History with Top–Down Educational Policy tells us that students who benefit least are children from poverty, immigrants, and English Learners.

• The Common Core Wave is here and we are left with having to figure out a Bottom–Up approach sensitive to critical pedagogy from the get go.
Getting to the CORE
Common Core Standards

• DEEPER
• WIDER
• HIGHER
• CLEARER
• FEWER
Common Core Standards
12 Major Shifts

True alignment with Common Core in terms of curricular materials and classroom instruction requires 12 major shifts

Six in Language Arts and Six in Math

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English Language Arts
Six Major Shifts
English Language Arts Major Shifts

- Shift 1—PK–5 Balancing Informational & Literary Texts
- Shift 2—6–12 Knowledge in the Disciplines
- Shift 3—Staircase of Complexity
- Shift 4—Text-based Answers
- Shift 5—Writing from Sources
- Shift 6—Academic Vocabulary
Rolling Out the CCSS for English Learners

• A Large Majority of Students Expected to Meet the CCSS are English Language Learners

• ELL’s have the Challenge of Learning Academic Content and Oral and Written Language Skills Simultaneously

• **Support** for English Learners is **Beyond the Scope of the Standards**

• Ancillary Document with General Guidelines for Applying the Standards
Common Core State Standards Ancillary Document & Guidelines

• Appropriate instructional supports to make grade-level course work comprehensible
• Modified assessments that allow ELLs to demonstrate their content knowledge
• Additional time for ELL’s to complete tasks and assessments
• Opportunities for ELLs to interact with proficient English Speakers
• Opportunities for ELLs to build on their strengths, prior experiences, and background knowledge (CCSS Initiative, 2010b).
• Qualified teachers who use practices found to be effective in improving student achievement (CCSS Initiative, 2010a).
Common Core and English Learners

• What does this mean for English Learners?
  • Elevate learning to rigorous content and language simultaneously [Double the Work]

• What does this mean for teachers of English Learners?
  • Elevate their understanding of the power of social relations in classroom, and connections to students’ linguistic, social, and cultural identities.
New ELD State Standards

• Rolled out Nov. 2012
• Aligned to the Common Core State Standards

  Common Core—Common Understanding—Common Language

Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)

• Emerging
• Expanding
• Bridging
Addressing the Complexity of ELL’s Academic Achievement

• **Language progressions** – How students learn language, both in terms of general language acquisition and in terms of the acquisition of discipline-specific academic languages;

• **Language demands** – What kinds of linguistic expectations are embedded within specific texts and tasks with which students are being asked to engage;

• **Language scaffolds** – How specific representations and instructional strategies can be used to help students gain access to the concepts as well as to the language they need to learn;

• **Language supports** – How classrooms and schools can be organized to support students in continually building a deep understanding of language and content (Santos, Darling-Hammond, & Cheuk, 2012).
College and Career Readiness

- The new standards require students to engage deeply with complex text within and across all three disciplines. An emphasis on text complexity and language (academic vocabulary and function).
- Increased emphasis on building knowledge from informational text.
- An expectation that students will produce and use evidence in text to justify their views.
Sample Learning Activity

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WAS THE BEST ROUTE FOR FORTY-NINERS TO MIGRATE TO CA DURING THE GOLD RUSH OF 1849?

PEER EDITING USING INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Context

• 4th grade Spanish/English Dual Immersion classroom
• Unit on migration and immigration
• Opinion essay based on evidence provided in an informational text
• Group dialogue based on peer-editing after essays were exchanged
• Checklist and worksheets used to scaffold peer dialogue
What did you see?

- ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PRODUCTION
- Students working with INFORMATIONAL TEXTS
- ARGUMENTATION
- Peer feedback characterized by:
  - OPINION
  - EVIDENCE
  - EXPLANATION
  - DIALOGUE
Skills Aligned to Common Core State Standards

- Making **ARGUMENTS** to support **CLAIMS**
- Drawing **EVIDENCE** from texts to support arguments
- **INTERPRETING** information
- Describing overall **STRUCTURE** of a text
- Referring to **DETAILS** and **EXAMPLES** in a text
- Explaining author’s use of **REASONS** and **EVIDENCE**
- Creating an **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE** to support writer’s **PURPOSE**
Academic Language

• Most ELL’s eventually acquire adequate conversational language and informal writing skills, but they **often lack the academic language** that is essential for high levels of achievement in the content areas (Coleman and Goldenberg, 2012).

• **Example:** CCSS for literacy in history/social students, science, and technical subjects for grades 11–12 state, “Evaluate authors’ differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors’ claims, reasoning, and evidence.”
Characterizing Macro, But Decomposable CCSS Themes

- Emphasis on ways RECEPIENT AND PRODUCTIVE MODALITIES can interact to support learning.

- This focus has tended to foreground linguistic and particular cognitive demands viewed as STATIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS rather than PROCESSES THAT ARE BROUGHT TO LIFE.

- “GENRE” (Bazerman) is a way of working with texts that involves not only schemas for text structure but also PRACTICES (SCHEMAS) that are purposefully associated with these texts.

- E.g. consider “ARGUMENTATION” as framed in the CCSS: claim, evidence, warrant, back-up for warrant, qualifications and counter arguments.
Purpose and Theoretical Framework

- English learners constitute 1 in 4 of CA’s K–12 public school students.

- To close the achievement gap we must **ANALYZE** and **IMPLEMENT** the best and most current **RESEARCH** on improving educational outcomes for **ENGLISH LEARNERS**.
Community, Students, Teachers, Administrators
TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

• CCS Don’t Tell You How to Teach
• Need For Tight Teacher Collaboration
• Need For Vertical and Horizontal Articulation
• Gradual Increase of Complexity
• College and Career Ready
English Language Learner Typologies

Levels of English Proficiency:

• Bilingual
• Limited English
• Non-English
  • Difference in Ethnic Background/Dialect
  • Primary Language Literacy Level
  • Quality of Prior Schooling
  • Socioeconomic Status
Sociocultural Perspective on Classroom Interaction

• Teaching and learning as **ONGOING GENRE PRACTICES** in the classroom community

• **ARTIFACTS**—worksheets, template guides, etc.—help students record and communicate their work and thinking

• Students **SET AND NEGOTIATE “QUALITY STANDARDS”** for their work through dialogue

• Students’ performances reflect their personalities and individuality

• **DRAMATURGICAL PERFORMANCES** linked to their **SHARED CONSCIOUSNESS** of the meaning, value and relevance of their academic work
Creating Access to the Common Core Standards for ELL’s

• Create dialogical classrooms for ELL’s to interact with proficient English speakers
• Create authentic spaces that capitalize on ELL’s strengths, prior experiences, and background knowledge
• Create opportunities for classroom interactions (both listening and speaking) that develop concepts and academic language in the disciplines
• Make grade-level course work relevant and comprehensible
• Differentiate assessments that allow ELL’s to demonstrate their content knowledge regardless of their language proficiency
Sample English Learner: College and Career Ready

- Video depicts a Seventh Grade English Learner presenting to his parents and community members how he is prepared for college and career.
The Bigger Context

What does it take to make this happen in the broader **SCHOOL CONTEXT AND CULTURE**?

**At-A-Glance**

- Context and Ideology
- Power of Belief Systems
- Biliteracy Program
- Site-Based Decision Making
- Distributed Leadership
- Teacher Pedagogical and Ideological Clarity
- Students
- Parent Engagement
- CVLCC Leaders
Context and Ideology

Research/ Curriculum ELD STANDARDS
Teachers/ Administrators
Students/ Parents
Achievement Data/ Instruction

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
Power of Belief Systems

• The SPEECH and ACTION of the principal’s leadership team and teachers must reflect:

  • A BELIEF THAT THE TASK OF IMPROVING LEARNING RESULTS IS CHALLENGING, YET DOABLE.

  • A BELIEF THAT SUCCESS IS ATTAINABLE IF THEY WORK DILIGENTLY TO LEARN FROM THEIR PRACTICE, KEEP IMPROVING, AND KEEP SUPPORTING EACH OTHER.
Power of Belief Systems

• High expectations for all students
• Strong belief that all children can learn
• Belief that collaboration is key
• Parents as critical partners
Site–Based Decision Making

- “Contextualized” Literacy Program
- Effective use of data to **MONITOR, ADJUST and DEVELOP CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION**
- Rigorous and relevant goals to sustain and build upon excellent learning gains
- **TEACHERS AS INTELLECTUALS**
- Global Awareness (the school is the world)
Principals as Instructional Leaders

• Understand Major Shifts in Common Core Standards
• Know the Content Complexities
• Know your Teachers’ Knowledge Base [strengths/challenges]
• Be a Teacher not just a Manager
• Know the Contextual Realities of your Communities
• Lead Teachers to a Common Understanding
Distributed Leadership

- Strong leadership teams
- Shared responsibility for moving the school to high levels of success
- Shared responsibility and accountability for curriculum development
- Everyone is a leader…
New Generation Teachers

Engaged Pedagogy: Deeper, Wider, and Higher
Interactive Relationship Between Student and Teacher

- Teachers as Researchers
- Teachers as facilitators—not depositors of knowledge
- Teachers as Students/Students as Teachers
- Teachers as Collaborators
  - Vertical and Horizontal Collaboration and Planning!!!
Teacher Pedagogical and Ideological Clarity

• Teacher dispositions that lead to effective instruction
• Demonstration of the collaborative nature of teaching
• Effective differentiation of instruction
• Innovative language teachers
• Culturally and linguistically contextualized pedagogy
• Deep knowledge and understanding of content and standards
• Strong commitment and caring for their students
Students

- Culture and language valued
- High levels of self esteem
- Collaborative construction of linguistic and cognitive knowledge

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The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of the world (Freire, 2005).
Critical Thinking and Dialogue: CORE Skills

• Critical thinking consist of seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms young ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts and solving problems.

• Critical thinkers question information, conclusions and point of view. They strive to be clear, accurate, precise, and relevant. They seek to think beneath the surface, to be logical and fair. They apply these skills to their reading and writing as well as to their speaking, listening, and critiquing.
Parent Engagement

- Parents are engaged with their child’s education, every step of the way…
- Parent education
- Parent dialogue
SHIFTING OUR EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM

Caminante no hay camino el camino se hace al andar.

Traveler there is no road, the road is created as we walk.

Antonio Machado
Gracias, Thank You!

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