Teachers Say They Are Unprepared for Common Core

Unpreparedness is cited in common-core survey

By Catherine Gewertz

Even as the Common Core State Standards are being put into practice across most of the country, nearly half of teachers feel unprepared to teach them, especially to disadvantaged students, according to a new survey.

The study by the EPE Research Center, an arm of Editorial Projects in Education, the publisher of Education Week, found deep wells of concern among teachers about their readiness to meet the challenges posed by the common core in English/language arts and mathematics.

“Teachers are under tremendous pressure,” said Lisa Dickinson, an assistant director of educational issues for the American Federation of Teachers, which conducts several common-core training programs in school districts each month. “The new standards do require a major shift in instruction. And the needed supports really aren’t there.”

Teachers in adopting states were asked to rate their preparedness on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “very prepared” and 1 “not at all prepared.” When asked how prepared they were to teach the common core to their own students as a whole, 49 percent rated

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Source: EPE Research Center, 2012
GETTING READY

In an online survey on edweek.org, conducted by the EPE Research Center, teachers were asked for their views on how ready they and their schools are for the common core.

![Survey Results]

- **61%** of teachers report they're fully incorporated into all areas of their teaching.
- **21%** say they're incorporated into some areas of their teaching, but not others.
- **12%** are not at all incorporated into their teaching.
- **5%** don't know.

**SOURCE**: EPE Research Center, 2012

Conducted in October, the survey is not nationally representative of U.S. teachers. It is drawn from 600 K-12 educators who are registered users of edweek.org.

But the sample is quite diverse, drawing on K-12 teachers, school-based curriculum coordinators, instructional coaches, content specialists, and department leaders in cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural areas, and in schools of all sizes, serving students of varying income levels. As such, it is one notable gauge of how the precollege world is responding to the expectations of the common standards, which have been adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia.

And that gauge shows pronounced worry that teachers, students, districts, and states are far from ready to make the common core a success in the classroom, a little more than two years from when the first tests on the standards are scheduled to be given.

**The Neediest Students**

Students with special challenges, such as learning disabilities or limited English proficiency, appear to be particularly at risk of not being well served, since educators said they were the least prepared to teach those students. Even teachers who have had more rather than less professional development in the common standards reported that they were the least ready for those subgroups of students.

Three-quarters of those who had more than five days of training said they felt prepared to teach their own students as a whole, compared with one-third of those who had less than one day of professional development.

Six in 10 of those with more than five days of preparation felt ready to teach low-income students or those academically at risk, compared with about one-quarter of those who had less than a day of professional development.

Students with disabilities and English-language learners posed the greatest challenges: Only four in 10 of the teachers who have had more than five days of professional development in the common core felt prepared to teach the standards to such students. Fewer than 14 percent of those with less than a day of training said they felt ready.

While teachers’ sense of readiness to teach the common core tracks with how much professional development they've had, the survey shows nearly three in 10 have not had any such training at all. Of the 70 percent who have, 41 percent have had four days or more. Three in 10 have had only one day or less. Thirty-one percent reported having had two to three days of professional development.

Many in education contend that the common standards demand significant changes in pedagogy, and, in some cases, teachers’ content knowledge. In math, for instance, students are being asked to demonstrate their understanding not only of procedures, but also of their conceptual underpinnings. In English/language arts, they’re expected to marshal evidence from what they read to support arguments and build their muscle with informational texts.

Quick-Hit Training

The most frequently addressed subject of professional development was English/language arts, followed by math and a comparison of the common standards with states’ previous standards. Curriculum resources and collaboration with colleagues to teach the standards were also popular topics of professional development.

The least-frequent topic of professional development was how to teach the standards to subgroups of students. Only 18 percent of those who have had some training said it explored that area.
That’s a worrisome sign for some of the neediest students, said Sherida Britt, who oversees some of the professional-development activities conducted by the Alexandria, Va.-based group ASCD.

“We have to look at what teachers are saying and give them opportunities to engage in professional learning that addresses these issues and the needs of those particular students,” she said.

Although research has shown that job-embedded professional development is the most effective kind, only three in 10 educators who had received some training for the common core said that was the way it had been given.

“Due to resources, professional development is still the drive-by” variety in most districts, said the American Federation of Teachers’ Ms. Dickinson.

More typically, professional development was provided through seminars, lectures or conferences, or collaborative planning time with colleagues.

The most frequent providers of that training are staff members from the teachers’ schools or district central offices. One-third reported getting it from outside professionals; one-quarter received it from the state department of education; and 15 percent got it from a professional association.

What teachers really need, Ms. Dickinson said, is time to collaborate during the school day, when they can “really unpack the standards and look at lessons and understand what it looks like for student learning.”

“Teachers need time to collaborate [not only] within their grade, but across grades,” she said, “so they can understand the progression of the standards, what’s come before, and where they’re going. This is very complex work, and the time is just not built in for them.”

Funding and capacity problems complicate the provision of good-quality professional development, said Ms. Britt. Without a “strong, clear vision and support” for ongoing, consultative professional development, teachers get quick-hit sessions that don’t really build their collective capacity to improve instruction, she said.

“That’s pretty much in line with what teachers have been getting in previous years,” said Ms. Britt. “But the common core compounds the problem because there’s a sense of urgency. [The common assessments] are coming [in 2014-15], so people are really scrambling.”

**Schools, Districts, States**

In addition to being asked about their own sense of preparedness for the common standards, educators answering the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center survey were also asked to size up the readiness of their schools, districts, and states for the new standards. On the whole, they had more confidence in their own readiness than in that of the systems in which they function.

Fewer than one-third said their schools were well prepared or very well prepared for the standards, and more than two-thirds said their schools were not well prepared. Confidence dropped as the locus of authority moved even further from the classroom: Only 27 percent of the educators said their districts were up to the task, and only two in 10 said their states were.

Turning their eyes to their own students, teachers showed grave concerns about the children’s prospects for mastering the standards.

Asking to rate how well prepared their students are for that task on the 1-to-5 scale, with 5 being very prepared, only 23 percent of the educators gave the students 4’s or 5’s. Thirty-seven percent gave them 1’s and 2’s, and one-third gave them 3’s.

Teachers gave a mix of responses when asked about the standards’ quality and their potential to improve their practice. About 37 percent said the common standards are about as good as their own states’ previous standards, and 41 percent said the common standards were better. But even with that mixture of views, two-thirds said they thought the new standards would improve their teaching.

The EPE Research Center’s survey of educators’ views on the common core was funded by the Hewlett Foundation.
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Great Books Programs and the Common Core State Standards

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Common Core Raises Profile Of Virtual PD

By Katie Ash

Teachers at Highlands Middle School in Kentucky’s Fort Thomas school district recently did something they’d never done before: They took professional-development classes online.

Spurred by a need to provide high-quality, comprehensive professional development to help teachers make the transition to the Common Core State Standards, Highlands Middle School Principal Mark Goetz discovered online courses from ASCD—a nonprofit membership-based professional-development group based in Alexandria, Va.—that addressed those very topics.

“There was no one I could bring in cost-effectively to do professional development in this specific area for what I thought we could get off the Professional Development online,” says Goetz, although he is quick to point out that while saving money was a bonus, it cannot outweigh the need for high-quality Professional Development for his 660-student school. “[The courses] really pinpointed laser-like focus on what we were trying to get done.”

Goetz is not the only administrator turning to the Internet for professional development for his staff members. Ongoing and effective professional development is critical to implementing the common standards, experts say, and technology holds the key to providing deep learning experiences for teachers that can be scaled across state borders.

 “[Teachers] have been teaching a certain way and under certain kinds of standards and objectives for a long time,” said Barbara Treacy, the director of EdTech Leaders Online at the Newton, Mass.-based Education Development Center. “To change, we’re not going to be able to snap our fingers. They need support, and we cannot short-shrift the Professional Development that teachers need.”

Organizations providing professional-development resources, such as the EDC and ASCD, have been inundated with requests from schools for guidance on implementing common standards, officials from those organizations report.

“Everywhere we turn, we’re asked to help people with studying the common core,” said Treacy. “This has to start going on yesterday if students are really going to be able to show what they know on these tests [tied to the standards].”

As a result, those organizations are building robust online resources that can be used in all the states that have adopted the common standards. All but four states have signed on to the initiative, as has the District of Columbia.

The EDC has about 40 online professional-development courses aligned to the common standards, said Treacy, and is in the process of creating two courses that will provide overviews of the standards—one for math and one for English/language arts.

“We’re working with teachers in a learning-community model,” she said. “It’s facilitated, and it’s delivered over time, and it’s got some kind of accountability. … It provides an opportunity for deep reflection that teachers are going to need.”

PD Demands Doubles

And by providing the courses online, not only can teachers all over the country participate, but teachers also can become familiar with the technology tools needed to implement the standards, Treacy points out.

“Media and technology is integral throughout the common core in both the math and English/language arts standards,” she said. “If you’re getting the professional development online, and using those tools and incorporating those tools into the way that the professional development is delivered, that’s going to help teachers.”

ASCD also provides numerous resources for teachers to help ensure a smooth transition to the common standards.

The organization has been creating online courses for teachers—requiring from 10 to 15 hours of work per course—around various aspects of putting the common core in place, said Ed Milliken, ASCD’s managing director of professional development.

The group plans to create at least six more courses in the next four months to keep up with the demand for high-quality online professional development.

“The utilization of [common-core-related courses] has more than doubled in the past month,” Milliken says.

In addition, the organization has a subscription-based online channel that houses videos and other resources for various aspects of professional development called Professional Development in Focus, which includes a specific channel dedicated to common standards.

ASCD has also hosted a series of webinars about the common core that is archived on its website for educators to access.

The group’s latest offering is called EduCore. Part of a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, EduCore is a website that pulls together professional-development resources on common standards and allows teachers to search and bookmark lessons. (The Gates Foundation also helps fund Education Week’s coverage of the education industry and K-12 innovation.)

EduCore has incorporated math resources from the Shell Centre, based in Nottingham, England, as well as modules created by the Literacy Design Collaborative, a loosely
knit group of consultants working with the Gates Foundation.

But the website, which is free for anyone to use, is not just an aggregator of content, said Milliken. It divides each lesson into what the teacher needs to know before, during, and after the lesson, and it also allows teachers to save and print lessons as PDFs.

“What we have done is taken the information and made it very accessible,” Milliken said. The group is also working to incorporate social networking into the website to allow teachers to share best practices.

State Guidance

Schools and districts are also turning to their states for guidance to help find online professional-development resources for teachers that address the common core.

“Not all districts have the capacity to support this new vision,” said Greta Bornemann, the mathematics director for teaching and learning for the Washington office of superintendent of public instruction. Consequently, the state has pulled together resources online to help bridge the gap between large districts with more resources and smaller ones that may not have the manpower to come up with those tools alone.

The state offers an alignment analysis that compares the previous state standards with the common core in English/language arts and math, as well as an implementation timeline, a three-year transition plan, and webinars about the common standards.

The state also offers free face-to-face training sessions for teacher leaders to attend with the expectation that those leaders will return to their schools and share their knowledge with other teachers.

The ability to borrow materials and resources from other states to help teachers move to the common standards is key, said Bornemann.

“We don’t have the resources and capacity at the state level to produce large quantities of things, so taking advantage of what other states have created is really important,” she said. “This idea of states working together and collaborating is still something that is relatively new. … We’re clearly in a bigger sandbox now, and we’re certainly watching what other people are building.”

Similarly, in Maine, Patsy Dunton, a specialist in English/language arts for the state department of education, and Lee Anne Larsen, a literacy specialist for the department, are pulling together resources for educators in that state. They hosted a three-day institute in August that convened teams of teachers from across the state to take part in professional development around the common standards.

“We’ve been trying to focus partly on those shifts that need to happen and partly on the standards themselves and what the content is,” said Larsen.

In addition to the institute, the state has hosted numerous webinars on common-core subject areas as well as smaller face-to-face seminars around the state.

Dunton and Larsen also put out a monthly electronic newsletter that covers an aspect of common standards; the newsletters are then archived on the department’s website for future reference.

“One of the things we’ve tried to do is provide lots of different ways for educators to enter into the information,” Larsen said.

And in South Dakota, teachers go through blended professional-development work-

### Online PD Destinations

**EduCore**

http://educore.ascd.org/

*Created by:* ASCD
*For:* Teachers, administrators, educators

*Registration:* Not required, but it allows special access to certain features

*Features:* Aggregates professional-development resources, lesson plans, and learning modules to help educators implement the common standards in their classrooms. Created and maintained by the Alexandria, Va.-based ASCD with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the website is divided into three categories: general common core, math tools, and literacy tools. Teachers will find videos, PDFs, websites, and other resources to help them prepare for the transition to the common standards. Those who register can bookmark items that will then appear in the “My Resources” tab. Registered participants will also be allowed to create journal entries, where they can jot down notes about the resources they find. Although the site does not have social-networking capabilities yet, allowing teachers to interact on the site and share ideas and best practices is a goal, according to the ASCD.

**Illustrative Mathematics**

http://www.illustrativemathematics.org/

*Created by:* Institute of Mathematics and Education, University of Arizona
*For:* Teachers and other educators

*Registration:* Not required, but it allows special access to certain features

*Features:* Creates tasks for each common-core math standard that illustrate the central meaning of the standard and its connection to other standards, clarifies what is new about the standard, and provides instructional tools and lesson plans related to the standard. The tasks are written by teachers, mathematicians, and other educators and reviewed by both a math expert and a classroom expert before they are posted to the website. The standards are divided between the K-8 and high school levels, and are then broken down by grade. Registered users can comment on and rate tasks as well as submit tasks for review. The leaders of Illustrative Mathematics say they hope to increase the social-networking capabilities of the site, such as adding a feature that will automatically notify a user if a comment he or she posted has drawn a response. The project, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has about 500 tasks so far and aims to reach at least 2,000.

**LearnZillion**

http://learnzillion.com/

*Created by:* LearnZillion
*For:* Teachers

*Registration:* Required

*Features:* Hosts video lessons and assessments related to the common standards in math and literacy for grades 3-9. The website was created with content from teachers at the E.L. Haynes Public Charter School in the District of Columbia, as well as teachers around the country, and is funded by the Next Generation Learning Challenge, the NewSchools Venture Fund, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Achievement Network, among others. Eric Westendorf, a former principal at E.L. Haynes, and Alix Guerrier, an education consultant, founded the company. The site currently hosts about 2,000 online lessons available to teachers for free, and teachers can create playlists of lessons, contributed from a variety of teachers. Lessons include screencasts, videos, guided practice, commentary from the content creator, and PowerPoint slides. Creators of LearnZillion hope to add more functionality to the site that will allow users to contribute lessons and post resources as well as provide feedback on the already-posted lessons.
shops, where they meet in face-to-face seminars but bring laptops with them to complete activities during the face-to-face session, said Becky Nelson, the team leader in the office of learning and instruction in the state department of education. South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard, a Republican, has set aside $8.4 million for teacher training in various areas, including the common core, allowing teachers to receive money for attending Professional Development events. Some districts have submitted professional-development plans in hopes of receiving Professional Development vouchers from the fund to host their own events for teachers.

“We want to keep the options flexible for the districts because every district need is not the same,” says Nelson. “We have very large and very small districts, and we wanted to make sure they could design a plan that would work for them.”

In addition to the blended learning opportunities available, the state has worked with the Rapid City, S.D.-based professional-development organization TIE, which stands for technology and innovation in education, to provide access to MyOER, a website that houses open educational resources aligned to the common core for teachers.

Carrie Heath Phillips, the senior program associate for the Common Core State Standards for the Council of Chief State School Officers, one of the groups that led the standards initiative, says that “it’s all about making sure that high-quality professional development is able to reach teachers and principals and school leaders, and technology is obviously a very powerful way to do that.”

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Common Core Thrusts Librarians Into Leadership Role

By Catherine Gewertz

It’s the second week of the school year, and middle school librarian Kristen Hearne is pulling outdated nonfiction books from the shelves. She is showing one teacher how to track down primary-source documents from the Vietnam War and helping a group of other teachers design a project that uses folk tales to draw students into cross-cultural comparisons.

With the common standards on her doorstep, Ms. Hearne has a lot to do. Her library at Wren Middle School in Piedmont, S.C., is a nerve center in her school’s work to arm both teachers and students for a focus on new kinds of study. She’s working to build not only students’ skills in writing, reading, research, and analysis, but also teachers’ skills in teaching them. She and other librarians say they view the common core, with its emphasis on explanation, complex text, and cross-disciplinary synthesis, as an unprecedented opportunity for them to really strut their stuff.

“When it comes to the common core, librarians can be a school’s secret weapon,” said Ms. Hearne, who blogs as “The Librarian in the Middle.”

Like most school librarians, Ms. Hearne has been trained both as a teacher and a librarian, a combination she thinks is perfectly suited to helping students and teachers as the Common Core State Standards press them into inquiry-based modes of learning and teaching. She helps them find a range of reading materials in printed or online form and collaborates to develop challenging cross-disciplinary projects. And like colleagues around the country, Ms. Hearne also plays important instructional roles often unrecognized by the public: as co-instructor alongside classroom teachers, and as professional-development provider for those teachers.

“The common standards are the best opportunity we’ve had to take an instructional-leadership role in the schools and really to support every classroom teacher substantively,” said Barbara Stripling, the president-elect of the American Library Association, and a professor of practice in library science at Syracuse University.

Ms. Stripling’s work to implement the common core in the New York City schools illustrates the central role school librarians are playing as the standards move from ideas on a page to instruction in the classroom. Overseeing that district’s 1,200 school librarians, Ms. Stripling and her staff analyzed the standards’ expectations for inquiry and information-literacy, developed sample lessons and formative-assessment tools around key common-core skills, and shared those and other resources during four-day development sessions with the district’s librarians.

Guiding Teachers

Adopted by all but four states, the standards have prompted coordinating discussions among the library-association divisions that represent librarians in public schools, city libraries, and higher education, said Susan Ballard, the president of the American Association of School Librarians, one of those divisions. All librarians are
affected by the new expectations, she said: those who help at K-12 schools, at city libraries during the after-school and weekend hours, and those on college campuses, who have had to support students unequipped for college-level research and inquiry.

“The common standards drove us to look at ourselves as an ecosystem, all working together,” Ms. Ballard said. “Students have a false sense of security that they can find anything online, but that’s mostly quick facts. They don’t know how to ask good, researchable questions, assess information critically. So much of the core is based in inquiry, and that is what librarians do on a daily basis. It speaks our language.”

A comparison of the AASL’s own standards for learning with the new standards showed similar expectations for students’ skills and “habits of mind,” she said.

As lead librarian for the New Hanover County schools in Wilmington, N.C., Jennifer LaGarde has been focusing intently on “beefing up” her role as an instructional support to teachers, she said.

“The common core is so much about how we teach,” said Ms. LaGarde, a national-board-certified librarian, winner of the ALA’s 2011 “I Love My Librarian” award, and the author of the “Adventures of Library Girl” blog. “We’ve been looking at support materials, but we’re more focused on shifting to inquiry-based instruction.

“Materials are almost secondary; it’s really about helping teachers think about new ways to provide instruction and helping them see that is what librarians do on a daily basis. It speaks our language.”

Even as they play that role, however, librarians themselves are drawing on a leaner set of resources because of cutbacks in recent years. Between the 2004-05 and 2010-11 school years, 32 states lost library positions, according to an analysis by Keith Curry Lance, a consultant with rsl Research Group in Louisville, Colo. Those losses averaged 161 positions, or 16 percent, per state, but went as high as 48 percent in Michigan.

Ms. LaGarde said she has had no dedicated library budget in Wilmington for four years and instead must resort to “begging the principal” for what she needs. The common core’s emphasis on complex texts, and in particular on rich nonfiction, has given her “great ammunition” to expand her collection, as teachers demand new kinds of reading materials, she said.

In some places, the common core appears to be driving restorations of those budget cuts. Ms. Hearne reports that although this is her third year without an assistant, her book budget has doubled this year. That came in the wake of her superintendent’s request for a report on the percentage of fiction and nonfiction, and the age of the nonfiction materials, in the district’s school libraries, she said.

**Revamping Collections**

The common standards have prompted school librarians to “take a hard look” at their collections to weed out dated material and bolster challenging fiction and nonfiction resources, said the AASL’s Ms. Ballard. In doing so, they are looking especially closely at the rigor of the readings they offer, since the standards emphasize assigning students “on-grade-level” texts, even if that means extra supports are needed to help them. Librarians are also looking to better balance their collections with high-quality nonfiction, she said, since the standards use such texts as content-builders and vehicles for the teaching of discipline-specific literacy skills.

Paige Jaeger, who oversees 84 school libraries in the Saratoga Springs, N.Y., area, counted more than 700 “power verbs” in the standards, such as “analyze,” “integrate,” and “formulate,” that press students toward more rigor and inquiry-based learning. That has implications both for a library’s collection of resources and for the way teachers teach, said Ms. Jaeger, who conducted a recent common-core training for the AASL and posted those resources on her blog. She is preaching a three-part gospel to her colleagues: rich text, raising rigor, and repackaging research.

Ms. Jaeger helps teachers rework their curricula into research-driven activities that require students to put those power verbs into action. “If your assignment can be answered on Google, it’s void of higher-level thought,” she quipped.

Case in point: the typical report on a country, which is often little more than an assembly of facts. Ms. Jaeger and her colleagues have reshaped it around a question. Students might be asked what it means to live in a globally interdependent world. They could be sent home with an assignment to examine the labels on their clothing and food and note their countries of origin. As a class, they can graph those nations and examine the emerging portrait of importers and exporters. Each student could dive into his or her country’s place in that system and write about the perils and promises of that role. Then, imagining themselves as ambassadors at the United Nations, they would have to figure out what issues are most pressing for their country and how best to plead for funding.
In Common Core, Teachers See Interdisciplinary Opportunities

By Liana Heitin

Educators around the country are exploring innovative ways to teach the new common-core literacy standards, and some are calling attention to an approach they say is working well: interdisciplinary thematic units.

Whether they’ve had these types of units in their repertoires for years or are just now jumping into such cross-curricular work, educators say the new standards support this type of teaching in several ways.

First, one of the key instructional shifts associated with the Common Core State Standards in English/language arts is the requirement that students, starting in 5th grade, read more nonfiction than fiction. Some English teachers have lamented the prospect of replacing Shakespeare and Sandra Cisneros with informational texts. But proponents of the common standards point out that, as a footnote in the introduction to the standards explains, the required percentages for nonfiction “reflect the sum of student reading, not just reading in ELA settings.” That is, informational texts are expected to be the shared responsibility of teachers “across the grade,” potentially creating new opportunities for cross-curricular projects.

In addition, the common standards lay out specific literacy requirements for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, and they emphasize research and synthesizing skills. Rather than tackling these new objectives in subject-area silos, some teachers are choosing to address them by integrating real-world themes and social issues into projects, and by reaching across hallways to do this work with colleagues.

The common core “certainly lends itself to integrated interdisciplinary units,” said Bobbi Farrell, a veteran teacher at Messalonskee Middle School in Oakland, Maine. Several years ago, she and her colleagues began moving to a standards-based approach to teaching, in which students go at their own pace and do not receive grades. Instead, kids are responsible for attaining proficiency in each standard. The group built this new approach, which Farrell calls “mass-customized learning,” on the common-core standards, finalized in 2010.

One Theme, Many Standards

Farrell, who teaches both social studies and language arts, often organizes her instruction around a theme. “For example, we may do a unit on identity,” she explained. “Within that, we can look at immigration or social classes within social studies. We can look at such literature as The Outsiders within the framework of characterization or point of view.” Through the structure the theme provides, she said, students are able to hit a variety of standards, depending on their individual goals. “In a short span of five to six weeks, kids get a massive amount of teaching and learning in that one unit.”

While some language arts teachers are simply adding a nonfiction unit to fulfill the new reading requirements, others have found pairing fiction and nonfiction texts under a thematic umbrella to be a more effective way to teach critical reading. “In order to integrate the core in a way that doesn’t overtake your class with isolated discrete lessons, this is the way to do it,” said Sarah Brown Wessling, the 2010 National Teacher of the Year and a high school English teacher in Johnston, Iowa. “This is the way to get kids deeper into their analysis.”

By organizing around “a concept or principle or theme or quest,” teachers force students to engage with texts more deeply and compare them with one another. For instance, she said, “instead of thinking about teaching To Kill a Mockingbird, I’m teaching the concept of courage. To Kill a Mockingbird is one text I use. So is a [PBS]...
Frontline piece, a speech, an article. Putting those texts together in a bundle helps us to work toward conceptual understanding. That’s the spirit of the core.

Rob Meza-Ehlert, a 10th grade social studies teacher at the Kearny School of Digital Media and Design in San Diego, said that his small public high school is centered around interdisciplinary project-based learning. Teachers at the 450-student school, created though a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, work in grade-level teams to have students produce semester-long projects on topics of their choice. Tenth graders pick a social issue—genocide, environmental degradation, or human trafficking, for example—and read selected articles about it in social studies class, using the annotation skills they’ve learned in English. Then they continue the “research from my class with Socratic seminars in English,” Meza-Ehlert explained. “The walls between the two disciplines are broken down. We’re developing similar skills with a similar approach.” Eventually, students create a project—for instance, a video, brochure, or online game—to demonstrate what they’ve learned and offer something to the community.

Meza-Ehlert suggested that a strength of this approach is that it helps students see the natural fluidity between subjects. “I hear kids in my class talking about connections to English and science. As soon as kids are doing that on their own without being asked, you know what you’re doing is working,” he said.

A nine-year veteran at the school, Meza-Ehlert says the common-core standards mesh well with the school’s project-based learning model. “We actually have a pretty good foundation because a lot of what we’ve already been doing matches [the common core]. When I look at the common core … there are no shocks.”

Logistical Barriers

Even so, Kathy Glass, a curriculum and instruction consultant in the San Francisco area, and the author of books on mapping curriculum units to the common core for both primary and secondary grades, emphasizes that such units are not in-and-of themselves aligned with the common core. Teachers still need to do the hard work of adaptation. “I did interdisciplinary units 20 years ago,” she said. But, to teach them today with the common core, “I’d have to say, ‘Hm. … Let me look at the resources I used. Were they appropriately complex? Let me look at the questions I had. Were they text dependent? It’s all very specific to how rich the interdisciplinary unit was.”

In addition, there are, of course, logistical barriers to this kind of teaching.

For Farrell, teaching thematically often forces her to teach historical events out of order, “which, particularly in social studies, has been difficult,” she said. “You think of history more in terms of chronology. One of the issues we’re facing is how to know if we’re filling in all those gaps.”

The cross-subject-area, collaborative aspect can be tough to pull off as well, especially at the high school level. In elementary schools, where teachers are responsible for multiple disciplines, or in middle schools that are organized around teams, there are often more opportunities for teachers to collaborate on units. “If a school is organized for it, it makes a lot of sense,” said Wessling. “My school doesn’t happen to be organized for that. … Certainly the ways that high schools are traditionally organized makes it more difficult.”

While his high school has the luxuries of a small staff and flexible scheduling, however, Meza-Ehlert argues that all teachers can create such thematic units across disciplines. Teachers still need to do the hard work of adaptation. “The idea of putting a text in front of students and asking them to deconstruct and find meaning, to read closely, to ask questions, that’s how we started. It’s somewhat ironic that we’ve been sort of set up for this [ie., the new standards] for a long time.”

The group is now working to directly align its units to the standards.

Emily Chiariello, a teaching and learning specialist with the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance program in Montgomery, Ala., “knows what you’re doing is working.”

“Maybe this is also what the common core is trying to get us to realize—that these boundaries between disciplines are false. They’re not in the real world. I hope people can embrace those walls are coming down.”

EMILY CHIARIELLO
Teaching and Learning Specialist, Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance Program

Resources are also available to help teachers create such thematic units across disciplines.

Facing History and Ourselves, a civic-learning organization, has been offering free curricular support to teachers for almost four decades. The Brookline, Mass.-based nonprofit provides units and lessons on themes such as racism, democracy, and prejudice on its website. “Our model has always been to teach a piece of literature situated in a historical context,” said Jocelyn Stanton, senior program associate for special projects. “To understand the world around that piece of literature, you bring in primary sources, graphs, first-hand accounts”—all of which can count toward the common standards’ nonfiction reading requirements.

On the flip side, we’ve also pushed history teachers to not only look at primary sources and textbooks but to bring in works of poetry and short stories to complement the time period,” Stanton said. “By reading a poem from a Holocaust survivor, you deepen your understanding. I think the common core is basically asking teachers to do that.”

While many of Facing History’s units were written before the common standards existed, Stanton said they are philosophically and practically in line with what the core requires. “The idea of putting a text in front of students and asking them to deconstruct and find meaning, to read closely, to ask questions, that’s how we started. It’s somewhat ironic that we’ve been sort of set up for this [ie., the new standards] for a long time.”

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Great Books Programs and the Common Core State Standards, page 2

Reading, continued

**Common Core Standards**

**Craft and Structure**

Students should be able to:

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text; determine technical, connotative, and figurative meanings; and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone
- Analyze the structure of a text and understand how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

Students should be able to:

- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or compare the approaches the authors take

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

Students should be able to read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**Great Books Programs**

Through multiple readings, students analyze a text to examine how key words, phrases, and passages affect meaning. The combination of high-quality literature, Shared Inquiry discussion, and interpretive activities helps students discover how parts of a text relate to the whole to create a deeper understanding of the text.

Through Shared Inquiry students:

- Interpret the meaning of a text, taking into consideration the ideas of others to gain deeper insight
- Develop, articulate, and support their own ideas stating them clearly and fully
- Agree and disagree constructively

Cross-text activities provide students with opportunities to compare and contrast multiple texts, both thematically and stylistically.

**Writing**

**Text Types and Purposes**

Students should be able to:

- Write arguments to support claims and analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content

Great Books programs integrate writing with reading and discussion. Instructional activities and materials focus on how to write well-organized expository, creative, and interpretive essays. Writing is integrated throughout the program as a tool for thinking. Activities include:

- Writing notes, responses, and questions to spark original thinking
- Taking guided notes to develop a personal response to literature
- Stating, supporting, and modifying a thesis in writing
## Writing, continued

### Common Core Standards

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

Students should be able to:

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

### Great Books Programs

Great Books writing activities focus on the development, organization, and clear articulation of ideas consistent with purpose and audience. Writing activities rely on modeling, guided practice, and use of templates to organize thinking. Students edit and revise their writing with the help of peer reviews and rubrics.

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Students should be able to:

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism

### Range of Writing

Students should be able to write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Writing is integrated throughout each Great Books unit as students write questions; make notes on interpretive unit; respond to interpretive questions before and after Shared Inquiry; and write expository, creative, or evaluative essays. Writing activities take place over a range of time frames.

### Speaking and Listening

#### Comprehension and Collaboration

Students should be able to:

- Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
- Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric

Conversation and collaboration is integral to all interpretive activities in the Great Books program. In Shared Inquiry discussion students experience the power of language to communicate complex ideas, persuade others, and provoke thought. Students learn to work confidently in a group as they:

- Develop, articulate, and support interpretations
- Explain and defend concepts and ideas
- Listen attentively
- Agree and disagree with others constructively
- Synthesize and build on others’ ideas
### Common Core Standards

#### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Students should be able to present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Great Books Programs

In Shared Inquiry discussion and in other Great Books activities students learn to organize, explain, and support their ideas. The text selections and interpretive activities engage students in thoughtful exploration and exchange of complex ideas. A variety of rubrics provide criteria for personal, peer, and teacher assessments.

### Language

#### Conventions of Standard English

Students should be able to demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Great Books programs provide students with opportunities to demonstrate command of English grammar and usage as they analyze, discuss, and write about challenging literature.

#### Knowledge of Language

Students should be able to apply knowledge of language to understand how it functions in different contexts, so that they can make effective choices for meaning or style and comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Students analyze texts, examining the subtleties of how language affects meaning or style. Students learn the impact of specific words and details and focus on specific sentences and passages to comprehend more fully.

#### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Students should be able to determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

Vocabulary is acquired and used throughout the interpretive activities; specific vocabulary activities teach students to:

- Comprehend through context clues
- Understand word parts and multiple-meaning words
- Understand figures of speech
- Consult reference materials

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**Visit** [www.greatbooks.org/corestandards](http://www.greatbooks.org/corestandards) **to:**

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Q&A:

Charlotte Danielson on Teaching And the Common Core

By Anthony Rebora

CHARLOTTE DANIELSON, a former teacher and school administrator with degrees from Cornell and Oxford Universities, is one of the most recognized authorities on teaching practice in the United States. A popular speaker and trainer, she is best known as the creator of the “Framework for Teaching,” a 115-page set of components for effective pedagogy that is used in many states and districts to inform teacher evaluation and professional development.

Danielson recently released a new edition of her framework for 2013, with updates designed to reflect the Common Core State Standards.

In a recent interview, Education Week talked to her about the common standards and how they might change teachers’ work.

Q What are the central implications of the common standards in terms of instructional practice, or the way teachers teach?

DANIELSON: That’s a good question, because we tend to think about the common core in terms of what students learn—for example, whether they demonstrate understanding of a concept or strong argumentation skills, being able to establish a point and defend it logically. Those are, of course, curriculum and ultimately assessment issues. But they also have implications for instruction—that is, how do you teach students the skills of argumentation? How do you teach in a way that advances conceptual understanding rather than superficial knowledge? These types of learning outcomes require different kinds of instructional practices—ones that many teachers are not adequately prepared to use.

I think the common core rests on a view of teaching as complex decisionmaking, as opposed to something more routine or drill-based. That’s a view I’ve always taken as well. It requires instructional strategies on teachers’ parts that enable students to explore concepts and discuss them with each other, to question and respectfully challenge classmates’ assertions. So I see the common core as a fertile and rich opportunity for really important professional learning by teachers, because—I don’t know how to say this nicely—well, not all teachers have been prepared to teach in this way. I see that as one of the enormous challenges facing the common-core rollout.

Q When you walk into a classroom, will good teaching look different under the common core?

DANIELSON: Well, that depends on how teachers are teaching now. But when I walk into a classroom, of course I care about what the teacher is doing, but in some ways I care even more about what the students are doing. What’s the nature of the task? Are students being invited, or even required, to think? Naturally, that has implications for what the teacher is doing and what the teacher has already done. That is, has the teacher designed learning experiences for kids that engage them in thinking or formulating and testing hypotheses or challenging one another respectfully or developing an understanding of a concept? You really only know what a teacher is doing when you look at what the students are doing. I also listen carefully to how teachers question students—if they ask kids to explain their thinking, for instance. That’s very different from just saying that’s the right or wrong answer. It’s a very different mindset about wanting to understand the students’ thinking and their degree and level of understanding.

Q How much of your framework has changed as a result of the common standards?

DANIELSON: Not much. What I did was make explicit some things that were always there. The Framework for Teaching has always been grounded in the same fundamental assumptions as the common standards—for example, the importance of student conceptual understanding and of student intellectual engagement. I just called those things out. But it’s important to note that the common standards so far only apply to two subject areas, literacy and mathematics, whereas my framework is generic—I intend it to apply to all settings. So in terms of the actual rubrics and the critical attributes of the different levels of performance, I could only incorporate those aspects of the common standards that in fact apply everywhere—for example, those things we’ve been talking about like argumentation and conceptual understanding. For things that are more subject-specific, such as the close reading of texts and the balance of fiction and nonfiction, I included those only in the examples for particular critical attributions.

Q The common-core documentation says that the standards are designed to give teachers flexibility. Does that make it more difficult for schools to evaluate teachers—insofar as there is no one right or prescribed way to do things?

DANIELSON: It’s true that the common standards are silent on the subject of how students should learn the content of the standards—there’s no doubt about that. But I don’t think that necessar-
illy makes it “more difficult” for administra-
tors to evaluate teachers’ practice. That is, if
I’m going into a classroom and looking for
how well a teacher is implementing the
common core, I’m going to look for those
common themes that run through the com-
mon core, and if it’s literacy or math, look
for specific things. Again, I tend to look at
what the students are doing. So, for exam-
ple, do you see evidence of the teacher de-
veloping the skills that would encourage good
argumentation—not only by asking good
questions themselves but by encouraging
the students to ask good questions and re-
spectfully challenge one another’s point of
view? That kind of holistic inquiry has al-
ways been a part of my framework.

Q OK, so, imagine you are a school leader.
How much room would you give teach-
ers to experiment as they are implementing
the common core?

DANIELSON: I personally would allow them
to experiment quite a bit, because, again,
the common standards only describe what
students will learn. There are many ways to
achieve those goals. In addition, this is
all very new. As I said a minute ago, this is
a rich opportunity for good professional
learning—and for teachers to work to-
gether and maybe watch videos of one
other teaching, then pause the video and
talk about how or why particular decisions
were made. I think implementation of this
will be more productive if it’s done through
groups of teachers working together or
with a principal or instructional coach or
team leader—as opposed to having a prin-
cipal say, “This is the way it has to be.”
It seems to me that, given the opportunity
for deep professional learning work, teachers
will have the expertise in this at least as
much as principals or other school leaders.
I mean, they’re the ones who are going to
be able to say, “This is what common core
looks like in algebra,” or “This is what it
looks like in 3rd grade reading class.”

Furthermore, we’ve discovered in our
work that principals don’t always recognize
real student engagement. If the students
are compliant and doing what the teacher
says, if they’re on task and busy, princi-
pals will often call it “engaged.” But the
students might not be doing any thinking
at all. They might just be filling in some
blanks on a worksheet. So I think this shift
is going to challenge a lot of people
to think deeply and differently. That’s my
hope. And from a school leadership per-
spective, this means you don’t want to be
ramming things down peoples’ throats—I
think that’s at odds with the spirit of what
you’re trying to do with the common core.

Q There’s a lot of talk about teachers
being able to share and to make greater
use of supplemental curriculum materials like
primary sources. Do you have any recom-
mandation for teachers on evaluating the
quality or relevance of such resources?

DANIELSON: Yes, the use of primary
sources in lessons—diaries, ships’ logs, let-
ters—can be wonderful and extremely en-
riching. And when teachers use these kinds
of things, they can engage students in the
kinds of learning that absolutely reflect the
common core—that require analysis and
conjecture and move away from rote learn-
ing. And I think that as more materials
become available online, and as teachers
begin to delve into the standards and un-
derstand what kinds of skills they are try-
ing to develop in students, this can be a
very rich experience for teachers them-
selves. They will be able to get involved in
conversations with other educators and
gain expertise as to the kinds of resources
they need or want. I also assume that dis-
tricts and curriculum directors will also
help teachers evaluate lesson materials, in
terms of their applicability to particular
standards. At least in the early going,
teachers may just need to trust their school
or district leaders’ judgment on the value
of particular materials.

Q What’s your advice for developing for-
mative or benchmark assessments
based on the common standards, given that
the official common-core-aligned assess-
ments are still under development?

DANIELSON: I think it’s the same issue as
with teaching in general. You need to have
a deep understanding of what the stan-
dards are about. Let’s say you teach 4th
grade mathematics. From reading the stan-
dards, you can see that there’s a premium
on mathematical reasoning, let’s say. So
you would want to be both teaching and
formatively assessing kids on that. For ex-
ample, do the students understand the pro-
cesses they are using? Can they apply
them in varied situations?

But we have to define what we mean by
formative assessment—some people use
that term to mean interim summative as-
sessments, these benchmarking exams that
companies sell. That’s not my definition of
formative assessment. I consider formative
assessment to be a part of teaching, some-
thing that is assimilated into lesson plans
and instructional decisionmaking. It’s on-
going monitoring done by the teacher, not
just of the group as a whole but of individu-
als as well. In my view, it’s not mini-sum-
mative assessments—it’s not something
you administer, if you will, in January. It’s
an integral part of instruction. Formative
assessment is not something you buy off
the shelf. It’s a skill you learn how to do.

Q But how do you know if you’re doing it
well?

DANIELSON: The same way you know if
you’re doing teaching well. To me this is
another place where there’s an opportunity
for teachers to work together and deter-
mine what it looks like on the ground when
students are reaching the kinds of higher-
level learning objectives the common core
describes. It has to be part of teaching—an
integral part of conversations teachers
need to be having about whether they are
implementing the standards with fidelity.
What kind of responses are we getting
from our students? What kind of evidence
do we have that they understand what
they are learning? I think figuring out how
to measure these expectations is very much
on-the-ground work.

Q How will the common core affect teach-
ers who have students with a wide range
of skill levels or high needs?

DANIELSON: Well that hasn’t changed. That
is the perennial instructional challenge—
kids come into your classroom with a huge
range of backgrounds and skills. I fear that
the common core papers over that problem.

Q In what way?

DANIELSON: Well, in mathematics, for ex-
ample, you’re expected to focus on a few
key concepts for 3rd graders. But suppose
you’ve got some students who never mas-
tered the 1st grade skills. The standards
documentation, as far as I can see, is silent
on how a teacher handles that situation.

Q So what’s your advice for a teacher in
that position?

DANIELSON: As an outsider, it’s hard to be
specific, but I think one has to understand
the developmental learning sequence of par-
ticular concepts and teach them in a way
that’s compatible with the central themes of
the common core. That is, the specific topics
to me are less important than the big ideas.
So if I’m teaching for conceptual understanding, which is a big idea in the common core, I’m going to go for conceptual understanding while maybe modulating the specific skills I’m teaching. Say I’m a 4th grade teacher and prime numbers is a 4th grade skill, but I’ve got some 4th graders who don’t understand place value. In that case, my own personal inclination would be to ensure that my students develop conceptual understanding of place value at that point—because that’s what they need. So the big idea of conceptual understanding is still consistent. But the actual topic? I don’t see how you can responsibly say anything other than that you have to be flexible and teach students what they have the background to learn at that point. Otherwise, you’re setting them up for failure.

Q Are there things about the common core that you don’t like?

DANIELSON: No, not really, not conceptually. But I do worry somewhat about the assessments—I’m concerned that we may be headed for a train wreck there. The test items I’ve seen that have been released so far are extremely challenging. If I had to take a test that was entirely comprised of items like that, I’m not sure that I would pass it—and I’ve got a bunch of degrees. So I do worry that in some schools we’ll have 80 percent or some large number of students failing. That’s what I mean by train wreck. But who knows? We just don’t know enough about the assessments right now. But when I have shown some of those released items to groups of educators—to teachers and administrators—the room just goes very quiet. So I can imagine a hostile response on the part of some educators and communities. But I’d like to be wrong about that.

I do think the vision of the common core, in terms of the conceptual framework, is terrific. For some educators, it represents a real change in mindset. It’s about getting away from this scripted or pre-digested textbook-based instruction and really asking questions and encouraging deep understanding. I love all that tremendously. I mean, when you ask a kid who doesn’t like school, “Why not?,” you never hear him say, “Because it’s too hard.” Kids say, “It’s boring.” And you know what? They have a point. A lot of it is. There are a lot of boring lessons out there—and I see the common core as a way of breaking out of that, because it does put a real premium on students’ deeper learning and understanding and engagement, real engagement.

Q Do you have specific advice for teachers who are making the transition to the common-core standards right now?

DANIELSON: I guess my advice to teachers would be to take a deep breath and look at ways this might be compatible with what they’re already doing and what they want to do in their classrooms. Good teaching has always been what the common core is asking: inviting students to think and to understand complex concepts. The standards are going to invite teachers to think deeply about what the students are learning, and about whether they are really teaching for understanding, and how they can do that better—because that’s where the real power in learning is. This is a big initiative, and it is going to require a major reorientation in how many people think about instruction and student learning. There’s no doubt about that. I don’t think we should pretend otherwise. On the other hand, it’s always been the vision of some people, including me, that that’s how we ought to be teaching—for deep engagement. And by engagement I mean intellectual engagement, resulting in the understanding of complex concepts.

A s a middle school principal serving on the Kentucky Task Force for Professional Learning, a Learning Forward initiative to develop a statewide, comprehensive professional learning system to support Kentucky’s implementation of Common Core State Standards, I quickly saw the need for revising professional learning in our schools, beginning with a change in our vocabulary—replacing professional development with professional learning. When combined with the introduction and deconstruction of the common core, the term “professional learning” suggests the learning culture is continuous through collaborative learning teams or study teams that focus on teacher knowledge, skills, and instruction, thus improving academic achievement. When I consider what this shift means for me as the school leader, I see that professional learning redefines the role of the principal in three key areas:

- Use data-driven decisionmaking: To determine the skills needed to improve academic achievement in my building, I needed to concentrate on the data resources available to determine the skills lacking in my building in order to improve academic achievement. It is essential to develop a culture that is receptive to change. A principal must be able to establish a collaborative team to analyze data. Our data team determined our highest priority need, which was teacher instruction. The team met with each department chairperson to share and analyze the data. I used professional learning time to discuss and formulate teacher priorities for learning. Teachers worked individually and collaboratively, in grade-level teams and departments, creating a new vision for our school.
Strengthen skills: As a staff, we began developing the skills and strategies necessary to support our vision. All stakeholders agreed that instructional skills such as assessment, standards-based grading, higher-ordered questioning skills, and curriculum alignment of the common-core standards should be addressed. I led two book studies, *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* and *Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning* during our Monday professional learning and Tuesday team meetings. Our district conducted two instructional rounds to determine the level of rigor and student engagement in the classrooms. My assistant principal, instructional coach, and I frequently visited classrooms, providing feedback to improve instruction. Teachers observed instruction at elementary and high school levels, and grade-level teams observed other grade-level teachers in our building.

Build a continuous learning culture: Change is inevitable. It is my responsibility to manage that change and devote time to develop confidence and growth in each staff member. Change was definitely a measure of our culture this school year; we had 18 new teachers, nine of whom just concluded their student-teaching. It was important to provide the support they needed to be successful. Each teacher had a mentor, college resource teacher, and me to cry, laugh, or holler with during the year. Relationships developed between the principal and the teaching staff have become a dynamic part of the puzzle when analyzing instruction, knowledge, or pedagogy. The trust between teachers and instructional leaders provided a positive foundation for goal setting, constructive feedback, and self-evaluation, ensuring student achievement.

All teachers met with me individually to discuss professional growth plans for the new school year; we used data from observations, district rounds, and self-reflection to develop one individual improvement goal and the strategies needed to meet the goal. Teachers then created another goal using the data that reflected team, department, or school initiatives. Teachers will continually monitor their progress toward individual goals as well as school goals, making adjustments when needed throughout the year.

Overall, through this experience with the task force, I have learned that professional learning must be a growth process that is data-based, student-focused, and continuous. It should provide teachers the opportunities to observe exemplary teaching, collaborate with other teachers, provide resources for growth, provide time to analyze data and plan instructional strategies, and opportunities to attend outside professional learning as well as embedded learning. In order for principals to achieve the tasks required for today’s demands, such as common-core implementation, the mindset shift must be consistent with the work required if all students are expected to achieve college—and career-ready standards.

Bryant Gillis is principal at Tichenor Middle School in Erlanger, Ky.
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http://www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/crosswalk

Common Core State Standards Initiative
http://www.corestandards.org/

Literacy Design Collaborative
http://www.literacydesigncollaborative.org/

Math Design Collaborative
http://www.mygroupgenius.org/mathematics/

Primary Sources 2012
http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources/download.asp
Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012

Teacher Perspectives on the Common Core
EPE Research Center, 2012

Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: Implementing the Common Core
http://www.learningforward.org/publications/implementing-common-core
Learning Forward, 2013
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