

Reading

Learned about the Common Core's Text Complexity and concluded that nearly every main selection in the Reading Street program falls within the expected lexile ranges.

Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Lexile Ranges

Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standard	Old Lexile Range	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR Expectations
K-1	N/A	N/A
2-3	450-725	450-790
4-5	645-845	770-980
6-8	860-1010	955-1155
9-10	960-1115	1080-1305
11-CCR	1070-1220	1215-1355

Checked the alignment of the Reading Street Program with the Common Core

1. Used the Pearson Program Alignment Packets to verify that the Reading Street lessons met the expectations set forth by the Common Core Standards. (show teachers an example of the shaded charts you did)
2. Looked at each lesson in Unit 1 and identified where, when, and how each standard was addressed and if the suggested instructional plan met or exceeded the Standard's Expectation. We took the approach of "trust, but verify".

Results

- At first, there appeared to be some gaps in the Reading Street Program (as defined by the Common Core). But when the specific lesson analysis was completed, it was determined that very few concerns existed. Many of the pre-supposed "gaps" were actually met in that particular lesson or in other lessons within the unit.

Next Steps

We need to make sure that Reading Street is really aligned with the Common Core. Building level "experts" will explain the process to teachers and collect the data after every unit.

THIS IS A DATA COLLECTION YEAR. THERE ARE NO EXPECTATIONS FOR CHANGING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES OR PROGRAMMING.

Writing

Learned about the three text types required by the Common Core

1. Argument/Persuasion: defending their opinions by providing examples, offering logical reasons for their assertions, and explaining cause and effect.
2. Informational/Explanatory Writing: conveying true information accurately including scientific and historical reports, summaries, as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications,
3. Narrative Writing: conveying personal experience, either real or imaginary

The special place of argument in the Common Core: While all three text types are important, the Standards put particular emphasis on students' ability to write sound arguments on substantive topics and issues, as this ability is critical to college and career readiness. The 2011 prepublication framework [National Assessment Governing Board, 2007] maintains the 40 percent figure for persuasive writing at grade 12, allotting 40 percent to writing to explain and 20 percent to writing to convey experience.)

Checked the alignment of Instructional Materials and Strategies with the Common Core

1. unpacked each standard
2. determined how each standard is currently being taught and how else it might be taught
3. shared ideas as to how each standard might be assessed.

Results

- The writing standards are multi-layered and integrated within one another.
- Writing needs to take place in every subject area – even specials.
- Stamina is a key component of the Common Core. Students need to be writing shorter pieces of text and more of them.
- There needs to be a greater focus on arguments/information writing. Current pieces of writing can be “tweaked” to accommodate this need. (ie: Instead of writing about how much he loves his puppy, a student can write an informational piece about how to take care of a puppy or a letter to his parents convincing them that he’s responsible enough to get a puppy.)
- Technology plays an important role in the Common Core – not just word processing, but critiquing and responding to the writing of others.
- Students should only write about what they know. Grades 4-5 students need to develop beginning research skills.

Next Steps: Things that need to be worked on in the future. These are NOT goals for this year.

- unpack the writing standards
- write in every subject area; stop viewing writing as a separate subject area
- increase opportunities for students to practice answering questions that require them to support their answers and provide evidence
- offer more opportunities to write shorter pieces of text; increase student stamina for writing
- change the paradigm understanding of what a “prompt” is
- discontinue the current Reading Street writing prompts in Grade 4 and 5.
- use frequent, specific formative assessments
- develop purposeful, authentic common assessments across the district
- create, share, and respond to student writing using technology
- increase the use of informational mentor texts
- teach keyboarding skills

THIS YEAR....

Teachers will keep track of the opportunities students have to complete informational/opinion pieces* of writing. Data will be collected every week.

*This can be accomplished as easily as asking students to tell you why a certain character would be a better friend. Longer pieces of writing might include writing a short letter to their parents convincing them to let them have an anole or drafting an email requesting information from a toy manufacturer. Students could also be asked to write a few paragraphs about dog grooming or comparing/contrasting two favorite video games.

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Math

Learned about the Math Practices

Practices are the process skills used by students to learn the math content. These skills are transferable to all areas of learning (and life). For example...

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them

In math, students check their work and ask themselves, "Does my answer make sense?"

In reading, they "monitor and fix up" to ensure comprehension.

In writing, they revise their work to make it easier for their reader.

In life, they find different routes to the grocery store when they come upon a roadblock.

Look for and make use of structure.

In math, students identify and create AB patterns.

In reading, they identify word families and decode words with similar vowel patterns

In writing, they draft stories with a beginning, middle, and end.

In science, they identify patterns in experimental data so they can draw conclusions.

Aligned the Everyday Math Program with the Common Core

Used the Wright Group Program Alignment Manual to verify that the Everyday Math lessons meet the expectations set forth by the Common Core Standards. (show teachers the tally charts you did)

Completed a lesson analysis for Units 1 and 2.

Looked at each lesson and found out where the CC standard was addressed: Parts 1-2-3, Math Message, Mental Math, Math Boxes, or Homework. We also noted if (1) the standard wasn't explicitly taught during the lesson, thereby making the lesson useless, or (2) the standard wasn't addressed at all.

Results

- There are significant gaps in the EM Program (as defined by the Common Core). Some standards appeared to be covered quite well by the end of the year (tally sheets); others were not covered at all.
- About $\frac{1}{4}$ of the standards appear to be explicitly taught in the lessons. Many times, a standard was only covered in a math box, or as a little part in Part 1 of the lesson. Sometimes EM said they addressed a standard in a particular lesson, and the standard wasn't even part of the instruction. Other times, they said they addressed the standard, but they really didn't.
- Each EM lesson is deep-rooted in CC Practices (see little workbook), with minimal emphasis on content. This doesn't meet the expectation of the CC's "content depth" (deeper, less wide).
- There are a LOT of skills/concepts covered in Everyday Math that aren't even included in the Common Core. We can't just eliminate these lessons though because that tampers with program fidelity.

Next Steps

We could continue to use EM, but it would require a complete re-write of the program (looking for the places where the CC standards are addressed and supplementing/supplanting when needed – which will be VERY often – practically every lesson. Doing this will be a LOT of work for teachers and won't allow for program fidelity and consistency across the district, which will affect student learning and 6th grade instruction.

So....

Does what we discovered suggest that we should look for program alternatives? Yes...and that's what we'll do this year. There are two programs (that we know of) that were written with the Common Core in mind (Math in Focus and Envisions). We'll investigate these and verify alignment with the CCore.

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Science

Learned about the Understanding by Design template and reviewed the current sections completed and began to fill in information on the other sections.

Learned about the importance of a common assessment and adding in reading/writing of informational text to meet the Common Core standards in reading and writing.

Learned about the Common Core Science standards

Looked at materials and resources that would align with the units more closely.

Results:

Aligned the physical science units to the new Common Core Science standards.

Add the Common Core Science Practices to each unit.

Based on the topics/content expected by the Common Core Science standards, was decided that Kindergarten and First grade would concentrate on science process skills and use Reading Street for concept and vocabulary in science.

Again, the Common Core Science standards are less and more in-depth. There is no human body studies until middle school. These standards provide the foundation for deeper scientific learning at the upper grades.

AIMS science activity books provide hands-on experiments that are doable in a 30 to 40 minute time period using everyday materials.

Unit/material/resource changes:

Next Steps:

Teach the units using the new resources for those grade levels that have them.

Stop teaching units that have no connection to the Science Common Core standards.

Second grade—no shadows unit

First grade—butterflies and moon journals are optional, can do, don't have to

Add to the template sections as you go through the unit.

There will be data collection times throughout the year to provide your input/feedback to the science group.

Keep track of opportunities to integrate writing and reading of informational text into each unit. Add those ideas to the template to share.

Grade	Life	Earth/Space	Physical— Common Core	Inventions
K science practices	AIMS—Fall into Math and Science	Glide into Winter Math and Science	Spring into Math and Science	
1	Butterflies-optional	Moon Journal--optional	Sense-able Science	
2	Plants	Shadows	States of Matter	
3	Animals	Weather	Motion	
4	Food Chains and Webs	Rock Origins and Erosion	Forms of Energy	
5	Human Body	Earth Movements Solar System	Structure of Matter Chemical reactions	↓