Sneaking a Peek

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

Educators in grades K – 2 should look at the prototype items to get an idea of what is expected in the testing format and look to the CCSS for their grade to target the standards that they need to be working on with their students. PARCC plans to add additional suggested assessment prototypes for earlier grades in the future.

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

PARCC Item and Task Prototypes

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

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

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

To view the sample items, go to: http://www.parcconline.org/ and click on Item and Task Prototypes. The sample links are about half way down the page.
Student Achievement Partners at www.achievethecore.org has created tools to assist in the implementation process for CCSS. The following text is taken from that site, explains the shift of including more informational text, and the reasoning behind that shift.

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

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

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

Because students at these grades can listen to much more complex material than they can read themselves, read-aloud selections should be provided for the teachers in the curriculum materials. These should be at levels of complexity well above what students can read on their own. Science and social studies in particular should be taught in such a way that students have access to the concepts and vocabulary through read-alouds beyond what they can read on their own.

Source: www.corestandards.org

**Informational Text Strategy for First Grade**

In this section, informational text strategies are listed that are specifically designed for teachers in the 1st grade classroom. More may be located at http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pdf/ela-teach-strat-k-5.pdf

**Think, Pair, Share**

*Think:* The teacher prompts the students with a question such as “What is one thing that is similar about text one and text two?” Students then pause and think of their ideas for answers.

*Pair:* Students pair up to discuss responses. The length of the discussion depends on the complexity of the task.

*Share:* Student pairs can share out information from their discussions.

Writing can be added as a last Step to this process, allowing students to personally express thoughts and ideas gained from this activity.

**Knowledge is a process of piling up facts:**

*wisdom lies in their simplification.*

-Martin Luther King Jr.

**Digital Literacy** is embedded throughout the Common Core State Standards. Look at the following link for more information on how to incorporate technology in your lessons. www.learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/make-your-own/storymaker This site allows students to choose a genre of story to create and choose the key details of the story. The website then creates a story book based on the information chosen by the student. The story can be read online or printed out for the student to read.

*Watch for more websites and information to follow in this section in the coming months.*
Focus on Standard for Mathematical Practice 1

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

**How do I encourage MP1?**

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

Focus on Standard for Mathematical Practice 2

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

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

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

**How do I encourage MP2?**

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

Key Content Changes for 1st Grade

Students in Grade 1: Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve problem situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart and comparing, with unknowns in all positions, e.g., by using objects, drawings and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem.

**1.OA.1**

- Add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10. **1.OA.6**
- Add within 100, including adding a two-digit number and a one-digit number, and adding a two-digit number and a multiple of 10, using concrete models or drawings; relate strategy used to a written method and explain the reasoning used. **1.NBT.4**

They develop understanding of measurement, including concepts such as iterating. They compose/decompose plane or solid figures to build understanding of part-whole relationships.
Continuous School Improvement Connection

This best practice indicator is listed as a “Smart Start” Indicator, CL7, in the Rising Star on IIRC system.

Helpful Resources

- Comprehensive System of Learning Supports
- Visit www.isbe.net to download this newsletter.