Standards-Based Reporting

As districts implement the Common Core Standards, they are also reflecting on their reporting systems to ensure alignment with the revised standards. Many are looking at transitioning to a standards-based reporting system.

Thomas Guskey and Jane Bailey, in their book, Developing Standards-Based Report Cards, walk readers through the steps to make a positive, successful transition to standards-based report cards:

1. Define the purpose of your report card
2. Develop reporting standards
3. Address essential steps in development
4. Establish performance indicators
5. Develop the reporting form
6. Pilot test and revise

The first step to creating a meaningful and useful standards-based report card is to clearly define the purpose of the tool. Decide if its primary purpose is:

- To communicate information about students’ achievement to parents and others
- To provide information to students for self-evaluation
- To select, identify or group students for certain educational paths or programs
- To provide incentives for students to learn
- To evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs

- To provide evidence of students’ lack of effort or responsibility

This is a critical first step. After making the decision as to your report card’s purpose, include it on the document as a reminder as you move forward with implementation.

Best Practices Weekly

Best Practices Weekly (located at http://bestpracticesweekly.com/) is a website that houses the latest research for tips and instructional practices in a new and unique platform.

All the latest journals such as Reading Teacher, Reading Research Quarterly, American Educational Research Journal and others have their teaching tip shown in a short, concise abstract that explains the tool. Each topic has been summarized for the “key, take home message in a text, audio and video” segment for easy access. The following link shows a 4 minute video example regarding the use of prompts and how teachers might ignite discussions about texts by using research based thinking:

http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=106

Educators have the option of downloading the full summary from Best Practices Weekly, a companion worksheet, or watching the short video segments that last approximately 3-7 minutes.

Teachers must sign up for this free access with an email account. At this time, they are currently focusing on early and late elementary grades (K-6).

eVoc - Pairing Technology and Vocabulary Study

eVoc is a term some practitioners have called the pairing of technology and the instruction or study of vocabulary. In this issue of Best Practices Weekly, the authors summarize “concrete strategies for teaching digitally based vocabulary lessons” that instructors from Vanderbilt University and National University originally published in the Reading Teacher.

The authors suggest taking digital field trips through websites mentioned on the summary located at http://bestpracticesweekly.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Vocabulary-through-Technology-article.pdf.

Other ideas such as using multimedia to share vocabulary knowledge and several websites that share ideas for vocabulary games are listed. Access to the video link can be found here:

http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=215

“We could learn a lot from crayons:
Some are sharp,
Some are pretty,
Some are dull,
Some have weird names,
And all are different colors;
But they all have to live in the same box.”

Author: Unknown

Art Criticism in Read Alouds to Teach Theme?

Teaching theme is not required in kindergarten in the CCSS; however, teaching key ideas and details along with craft and structure are skills that lead to teaching theme. Design elements of a text such as the front and back covers and the details that authors use as clues on those pages can tell a lot. Students should be exposed to these features along with the way a key character is looking at another character or at the audience. How a student might interpret the actions in the artwork is an integral part of the story.

In this segment of the www.BestPracticesWeekly website, Frank Serafini from Arizona State University described a practice for the Reading Teacher that the authors share in a short video located at http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=1000.
First Grade Expectations from Kindergarten

With all the changes that are taking place as we transition to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, it is especially important to have vertical articulation conversations with the grades above and below those we are teaching. Students that enter 1st grade should be coming from Kindergarten with an emerging understanding of place value, knowing that the teen numbers consist of one ten and some more ones. Students this year will extend that to involve groups of tens and groups of ones. Students are expected to have already mastered addition and subtraction up to 5 and will need to extend this fluency to 10 during 1st grade. Students relate their understanding of counting to counting on in an addition problem or counting down in a subtraction problem.

Inside Mathematics

Inside Mathematics is a website created for teachers with the goal of providing researched mathematics instruction resources. Created from the Noyce Foundation’s Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative, Inside Mathematics offers
- Classroom Tasks
- Videos of lessons in the classroom
- Videos of Problems of the Month
- Videos of Re-engagement lessons
- Videos of Math Talks
- Problems of the month
- Tools for Coaches
- Tools for Administration

For more information visit: http://insidemathematics.org/

PARCC Formative Assessment Tool

PARCC is creating a set of innovative assessment tools to support teachers at the kindergarten and first grade level. These tools will provide educators with useful information related to how students demonstrate Common Core proficiencies, reported at an appropriate level of detail to supplement a teacher’s understanding of student proficiency.

These formative experiences are designed to fit within the regular classroom environment and can be used to adjust instruction as is appropriate. More information about the specific number of experiences and the time needed for students to engage in them will come out this fall.

http://www.parcconline.org/
Collaborative Learning is TOGETHER!

To increase student interest and engagement with subject matter, consider a collaborative learning environment (Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

This evidence-based practice has been shown to support 21st Century skills such as deeper reasoning and improved communication, along with influencing increases in social, emotional, and behavioral competencies (Youngerman, 1998).

To build capacity and manage the classroom during these highly effective learning times, pre-planning, modeling and practice time is crucial. A review of teacher-authored articles highlighted the following ‘lessons learned’ which support collaborative interactions:

1) Establish interpersonal norms. Setting norms supports effective interaction. Knowing how students are to interact with each other sets the stage for appropriate and productive interactions.
   One example is: ► ► ► ►

Step 1:
Choose a topic (e.g. communities) and assign small groups to select differing subtopics (e.g. work, family, friends).

Step 2: Students work within a collaborative environment in response to a more reflective question proposed by the teacher or other group (e.g. “How does one impact the many?”) (Slavin & Chamberlain, 1992).

CLASSROOM APPLICATION
Apply this strategy to discover free digital support tools.

Step 1: Assign student groups to search “digital tools for student collaboration;”

Step 2: Groups discuss when, where, and how one tool assists learning. Students produce a class resource.

Collaborative learning supports students synthesizing ideas as a group to create shared meaning and understanding and increases student interest and engagement with subject matter.

2) Explicit instruction on peer to peer listening skills. Practice to listen, pause, ask questions, paraphrase, and THEN respond.

3) Explicit instruction on asking good questions. “What” and “how” sentences lead to deeper and richer dialogue. Teach that questions are for clarification or for understanding.

4) Negotiation skills and the art of compromise. Extending beyond “win-lose” situations requires the ability to reframe opinions around values or agreed expectations. This sometimes includes revisiting norms.

5) Educator modeling. Viewing application of lessons learned can make a big impact. Teachers can consistently and visually place high value on group goals and individual accountability.

6) TRY AGAIN. Utilize new tools; work with a colleague to pre-plan, model, practice; re-assign student groupings; observe each other and discuss observations.

Collaborative learning strategies and tools engage many students’ natural instinct to be social and are at the core of most learning styles (Silver & Perini, 2010).


GROUP INVESTIGATION ▼ STEP BY STEP ▼

Common Core implementation includes group investigation through requiring students to work in small groups using cooperative inquiry, group discussion, and producing cooperative artifacts.

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