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).

Catch Reading Struggles Early

In an article from Better: Evidence Based Research, S. Al-Otabia from Florida State shares the ideas of how to catch a struggling reader with research based practices.

Some initial suggestions are to make certain core literacy programs are being implemented with fidelity and are inclusive of balanced decoding and comprehension instruction. Teachers can monitor progress by key indicators such as how many letters and sounds a student can read along with sight words. Finally, the summary of the article states that small groups of instruction should be based on data that is found. Give interventions to students who have the same areas of struggle.

When identifying needs and locating volunteers, reading specialists or teachers should train the groups of people who will come into contact with your struggling readers. For the full article visit: http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=857 and don't forget the companion teaching guide.

How to Get Students to Respond to Higher Level Questions

In an article for the Reading Teacher, two University of Minnesota faculty members explain how to get students engaged in quality levels of questioning and promoting different levels of thinking. Suggestions include offering students the opportunity to respond both verbally and in writing, modeling how to respond to higher level questions with more than one or two word answers, and planning well for questions that can be related to the theme.

Another suggestion was to "work with other teachers to prepare." For instance, the authors detail a school where during weekly grade-level meetings, teachers would brainstorm a list of high-order questions for the common texts. Teachers also worked together to create a rubric for assessing and analyzing how well students were responding.

Their full summary along with a companion guide can be found at: http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=878.

I had a very wise mother.
She always kept books that were my grade level in our house.
- Beverly Cleary
Second Grade Expectations from First Grade

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 2nd grade should be coming from 1st with an appropriate understanding of the equal sign having solved addition and subtraction problem with unknowns in all three positions. Students extend addition and subtraction fluency facts from 10 to 20, and addition and subtraction word problems from within 20 to within 100. Students take their understanding of place value with tens and ones and begin to see a bundle of ten tens as a hundred, and can count up to 1000. [http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks]

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 Diagnostic Assessment

PARCC is creating Diagnostic Assessments in Grades 2-8 that will be field tested in early 2015 and available for use in the 2015-16 school year. These assessments will be available on demand, will little set up and preparation, and administered and scored within a short period of time. They will provide detailed and easy to understand information regarding a student’s strengths and weaknesses relative to a given skill or set of skills as defined in the Common Core. This information will in turn help plan targeted interventions and instructional strategies.

[http://www.parcconline.org/]
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: ► ► ► ► ►

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.

**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.

**Collaboration in the Classroom - click for video**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDhvvoSFBHY

**Making Connections**

Common Core State Standards:
- Embedded throughout ELA strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening
- Math Practice Standard 3
- Danielson Framework:
  - Planning and Preparation 1c
  - Classroom Environment 2c
- Professional Responsibilities 4d

**Conditions for Learning Indicators** (Rising Star): CL 9

**Visit www.isbe.net to download this newsletter.**