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.

Promoting Adolescent Literacy

Www.AdLit.org is a website that contains resources geared for teachers and parents of adolescents. Some of the resources available address not only English Language Arts, but ideas for content area teachers and how to address the Common Core.

Some of the tools that are available on the website include: concise and detailed research on adolescent research (AdLit 101), explicit strategy instruction for all content areas in a library of tools (Classroom Strategies), and professional development video modules and resources for English language arts and content area teachers (Common Core Classroom).

The video modules in the Common Core Classroom contain all the teaching materials and strategy instructional tools needed to implement the lessons. The modules assist in expressing how a lesson aligns with the standards and offers reflection from the implementing teacher.

Finally, there are booklists available through the Books & Authors tab that will allow teachers to select books that may be thematically based or have an author interview connected to a text.

Informational Text and Inference for 6th Grade

The Adolescent Literacy website provides 6th grade teachers with a number of great resources for teaching that aligns with Common Core.

Inferencing is something we do all the time, but often students do not realize this is a skill they naturally use. The link listed below takes 6th grade teachers directly into Ms. Ramsey’s 6th grade classroom. Watch Ms. Ramsey use a simple photograph to help her students recognize information they can infer from a photo. Ms. Ramsey then uses the activity as a springboard into having students work together to determine what they can infer from the passage they read.

Not only will teachers see Ms. Ramsey in action, but the adolescent literacy website also provides links to strategies which can accompany this lesson.

http://www.adlit.org/articles/watch_and_learn/57671/

Finding Engaging Books for Students

Looking for books for students to read that coordinate with the content areas? The adolescent literacy website, referred to in the top article provides teachers with a list of books that engages teens while substantially increasing background knowledge.

The website www.adlit.org provides lists of books in the following areas:

- Biography
- Fantasy
- Historical Fiction
- History
- Performing Arts
- Science

Each book listed comes with a discussion guide. These guides provide teachers with discussion questions, extension activities, author information, and a summary of the book as well as videos and websites which accompany the book.
Sixth Grade Expectations from Fifth 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 6th grade should be coming from 5th grade with a strong understanding of multiplication, division and a definition of fraction. This lays the groundwork for the important concept of proportional reasoning, which continues to be important in all subsequent grades. Students’ K-5 experience with the four basic operations is now used on variable expressions and equations. Students work with whole and fractional numbers is now extended to rational numbers as students begin to use positive and negative numbers. The number line that has been building since K-5 now includes negative numbers, and the coordinate system from 5th grade is extended to all four quadrants.

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

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

PARCC Evidence Statements

PARCC has released Blueprints for the summative components of the assessment to be given in the spring of 2015 to all Illinois sixth graders. The PARCC assessment is based on Evidence Centered Design (ECD), which starts with broad claims defining goals for students. To assess these broad claims, they created Evidence Statements to show what a student would be able to do to show mastery of the standards. One type of sixth grade evidence statement is “Distinguish correct explanation/reasoning from that which is flawed, and – if there is a flaw in the argument – present corrected reasoning. (For example, some flawed ‘student’ reasoning is presented and the task is to correct and improve it.)” There is an evidence statement of this type that requires use of “securely-held content” from fifth grade Numbers & Operations in Base Ten and Measurement & Data.
http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs
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: ►►►►

   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).

   - ISBE Collaboration Guide

   **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.

   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.

To learn more about collaborative learning strategies, visit the ISBE Collaboration Guide [here](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/pls/level2/pdf/collaboration-guide.pdf) or the Comprehensive System of Learning Supports (CIAL) [here](http://www.thinkingcollaborative.com).

**Related Conditions for Learning Indicators** are included in the **Rising Star** school improvement tool and accessible at the ISBE Learning Supports web site.

See more at [http://www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) to download this newsletter.