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:

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).

Captain Comprehension to the Rescue!

“A literacy teacher and a second grade teacher from Roosevelt Elementary in Park Ridge, Illinois created Poetry Power Man and a superhero gang of friends to combat Robot Readers and fight for fluency including addressing rate, expression, accuracy and learning.

The teacher authors used bad guy figures such as Robot Reader, Choppy Boy, Alien Dude and Flat man to teach students the “don’ts” of reading aloud. They then countered every villain with a hero to save the day! Poetry Power Man, Super Scooper, Expression Man and Captain Comprehension.

Teachers created visuals for each hero and encouraged students to battle robot reading habits with rate, accuracy, expression, and learning.”

Catch them at http://bestpracticesweekly.com/?page_id=106

“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. A downloadable print copy is also summarized for teachers. You don’t have to be an art teacher,

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Author: Unknown
Expectations for Future Grades

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. Kindergarten sets the groundwork for these discussions, working with parents and preschools to be able to take a student’s strengths and build upon them. Kindergarten should focus on two critical areas: representing and comparing whole numbers and describing shapes and space. The majority of students’ time in Kindergarten should be focused on using numbers, learning to write numbers up to 20, counting objects and representing these quantities, and building up to solving basic one-digit addition and subtraction problems, seeing them written as equations. This is also the time for students to begin developing their work in the practice standards; teachers need to encourage perseverance even when it involves struggle.

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: 

   1. Take turns. 
   2. Open Minds. 
   3. Gather Ideas by asking questions. 
   4. Experiences are together! 
   5. There are no wrong ideas. 
   6. Everyone is important. 

   RESPECT!

Adapted from http://www.thinkingcollaborative.com

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.

Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

Collaborative Learning Indicators

Conditions for Learning Indicators (Rising Star): CL 9

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

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

Visit www.isbe.net to download this newsletter.