The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), has released additional sample items for both English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The sample items show how PARCC is developing tasks to measure the critical content and skills found in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The sample items have undergone PARCC's rigorous review process to ensure quality and demonstrate the content that will be on the assessments in 2014-2015.

The release of paper-based items is the first of two that PARCC will be providing throughout the remainder of the calendar year. PARCC will provide a complementary set of paper-based items in October, so that there will be sample items in each grade level. In November, all sample items will be re-released on the technology platform that students will use for the spring field test, providing an early opportunity for students and educators to engage with the tools and functionalities on the assessment.

The primary purpose of sharing sample items is to provide information and to support educators as they continue the transition to the CCSS and the PARCC assessments. The sample items presented on the PARCC website demonstrate that core shifts at the heart of the CCSS are also integrated into the design of PARCC's assessments.

Excerpted from a publication on PARCC http://parcconline.org

Assessment List Serve
If you would like to have access to the most up-to-date Illinois Assessment information, subscribe to the Student Assessment listserv.

Send a blank email to assessment@isbe.net with the word “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line. The listserv will provide members with the most up-to-date information regarding Illinois state testing. For more information visit http://www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/htmls/listserv.htm

Field Testing
Illinois will be a major participant in PARCC Field Testing next spring. As many as 800 schools in the state will participate. Most will take only a portion of the test, either the Performance-Based or the End-of-Year items, in English/Language Arts or Mathematics. Districts were initially contacted in September with follow up expected later in the year. The tests will be administered between March and May of 2014.

http://www.parcconline.org/field-test
Student Achievement Partners

Student Achievement Partners (SAP) is a non-profit education reform organization which has developed resources to support and implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Teachers can find useful tools for various subject areas and grade levels on their website.

Their resources for the ELA shifts include a document which explains the shifts and a PowerPoint presentation of an Overview of the Common Core State Standards. One can access a collection of professional development modules including Power Points, videos and hands-on activities for workshops.

Videos from the America Achieves video library display examples of Core-aligned teaching in the classroom. Common Core Sample Lessons and Assessment Questions cover the topics of close reading and of text complexity. Exemplars of literacy in the sciences, technical subjects and history classes are also provided.

The accounts of teachers representing various grades levels and subject areas provide insight into transitioning into the Common Core. Instructional Practice Guides describe Core Actions for implementing the CCSS and can be used for teacher self-reflection, instructional coaching and peer-to-peer observations and feedback. These guides should not be used in teacher evaluations.

Source:
www.achievethecore.org

Observable Core Actions in Instruction

The Instructional Practice Guides provide teachers with concrete examples of evidence which reflect the CCSS and which can be observed in classroom lessons. The types of questions teachers should be asking include the following:

1. Questions which repeatedly return students to the text to build understanding

2. Questions that require students to cite evidence from the text

3. Questions that support students in developing facility with academic and domain specific language

4. Questions that challenge students in deep examination of the text.


An 11th Grade Evidence-Based Claims Unit

The unit described here is part of the Odell Education Literacy Instruction: Developing Core Proficiencies program, an integrated set of ELA units spanning grades 6-12. Using the text, The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. DuBois, teachers can create a unit to teach how to make evidence-based claims.

1. Students are guided by a text-dependent question as they read the text.

2. Students search in pairs for evidence to support claims made by the teacher.

3. Students organize their claims.

4. Students write EBCs.

5. Students create an evidence-based writing piece.

The unit plan, handouts, worksheets, the texts and instructions on how to use the materials along with other samples lessons and assessments can all be found at:

http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/sample-lessons
Illinois Math Curriculum Models

On August 29, 2013 ISBE released the newest material for the Illinois Math Curriculum Models. Scope and sequence documents, Unit plans, and an example lesson for Unit one of all grades (Kindergarten- High School Math 3) is now available at http://isbe.net/common_core/htmls/math-models.htm.

Example lessons for all units will be made available, in sequential order, every few weeks. Each unit will also contain several assessments. The curriculum models committee revised the scope and sequence for Math 1 and Math 2 and several units, due to the recent release of the Blueprint and Evidence Tables from PARCC. All curriculum models are aligned to the common core and consider relevant information from PARCC Model Content Frameworks, the Progression documents, EQuIP rubric, Publishers’ Criteria, and the PARCC Evidence Tables.

Math 3/Algebra 2 Illustrative Mathematics

Why Randomize?
For the 100 rectangles shown, the small squares that compose them have area 1, so the area of the rectangle is the number of squares, e.g., rectangle 7 has area 12. We want to estimate the mean (average) area of the population of 100 rectangles using the average area of a sample of 5 rectangles. We will use two methods and try to decide which method is better.

1. Take a quick look at the chart and then select 5 rectangles as your sample. This is your judgment (J) sample.
2. Calculate the mean area of the rectangles in your judgment sample. Combine your mean with those of the other members of the class to form a plot of the sample means.
For the rest of the task, visit http://www.illustrativemathematics.org/illustrations/191

Toolkit for Evaluating the Alignment of Material to CCSS

Achieve, Student Achievement Partners and the Council of Chief State School Officers have created and released a free resource to evaluate the alignment of materials to the Common Core. For mathematics, the toolkit offers an Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (IMET), an Assessment Item Tool (AET). The complete toolkit also includes an introduction and overview, the EQuIP Rubric, additional resources for evaluating the alignment of materials, and the K-8 and HS Publishers’ Criteria. Links to specific sections of the toolkit can be found at http://www.achieve.org/toolkit.
Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

**Why Perseverance? Why now?**

By now, teachers are likely witnessing frustration as students tackle new strategies in regard to close reading, complex texts, and multiple revisions. Perhaps students are having trouble sticking with a new math concept. Common Core State Standards require perseverance more than ever before. Therefore, this skill can no longer be assumed.

Whether you call it tenacity, agency, resilience, or even motivation, perseverance is necessary not only for success in the classroom, but in students’ personal and professional lives. At the same time, students have little practice in persevering in their technology-driven, instantly-gratifying world. Fortunately, perseverance is a skill that can be explicitly taught, and research findings indicate that this trait can be learned.

Yet this requires the adoption of a GROWTH MINDSET that assumes each student can improve their skills with ongoing effort. What does this look and sound like in the classroom? A class-wide adoption of a growth mindset is constantly reinforced by classroom messages.

**Your Voice, Your Choice**

**Classroom Messages That Promote A Growth Mindset**

- **We believe** in our potential and are committed to taking responsibility for our own learning.
- **We value** (and encourage) taking on challenges, exerting effort, and surmounting obstacles. No matter the outcome, learning is also in the journey.
- **We model** that working hard grows new brain connections, making one’s capacities and skills malleable with effort.
- **We create and sustain** a safe learning environment, which is not a place of judgment, but a safe place to practice self-management and self-responsibility skills.

*(Dweck, 2010)*

**Classroom Management**

Danielson’s Framework (3e) highlights teacher “persistence” as a professional skill. Teachers can also help model persistence skills for students, such as:

- Setting appropriate goals and related tasks.
- Preplanning for potential obstacles with solution strategies.
- Shifting thought from “failures” to “challenges” that can be overcome.

**Making Connections**

Common Core State Standards: Math Practice Standard 1

Danielson Framework: 3E Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

Conditions for Learning Indicators (Rising Star): CL10, CL7, CL4, CL8

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“Teachable moments” that cultivate student perseverance skills:

- Ensure match of student and content.
- Praise effort versus ability.
- Refrain from intervening prematurely with students’ struggle.

*(Shechtman, 2013)*

“...committed teachers don’t give up easily… [they] seek alternate approaches to help their students be successful… [and thereby] display a keen sense of efficacy.”

*(Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching)*

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

Complete references available upon request:

- Dweck, C. (2010) Mind-Sets... Principal Leadership... NASSP.

Visit [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) to download this newsletter.