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

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

Illustrative Student Behavior

The Instructional Practice Guides provide teachers with examples of the types of student behaviors which are the result of the Core Actions for Literacy which can be used when implementing the CCSS.

Once all students are provided with opportunities to engage in the work of a lesson, the teacher can expect to observe the following behaviors within the classroom:

- Students read, speak and/or write about demanding grade-level texts.
- Students provide textual evidence to support their answers
- Students use evidence to build on each other’s observations during discussions.
- Students complete literacy tasks independently.

Source: http://www.achievethecore.org/files/8713/7464/2390/

Transitioning to the Common Core State Standards

A high school social studies teacher described her transition to the Common Core State Standards as a challenging but worthwhile journey. The lessons she learned include the following:

- Allow the students more time to respond to higher level questions because those questions require more thought.

- Provide the students with a follow-up question after a challenging question in order to keep the discussion moving.
- Questions must be rooted so well in the text that students must return to the text in order to provide accurate answers.
- For students who struggle with reading, ask questions about smaller portions of text such as a single paragraph or a sentence.

Common Core Close Reading Sample Lessons, material from literary texts, informational texts and mini assessments are all included in this resource:

http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/classroom-voices/
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.

High School Illustrative Mathematics

Complex Distances

This task aligns to a plus (+) standard and therefore will not be assessed by PARCC. In this problem, you will compute some values related to the complex numbers 2+i and 5-3i.

1. Plot 2+i and 5-3i in the complex plane.
2. How far is 2+i from 5-3i?
3. What is the modulus of the difference of 2+i and 5-3i?
4. What is the midpoint of the line segment between 2+i and 5-3i?
5. What is the average of 2+i and 5-3i?
6. Describe, using the complex plane, the relationship between your answers in (b) and (c).
7. Describe, using the complex plane, the relationship between your answers in (d) and (e).

For more information: http://www.illustrativemathematics.org/

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.
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.

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.

Ensure match of student and content.

Refrain from intervening prematurely with students’ struggle.

Praise effort versus ability.

Making Connections

Common Core State Standards:
- Math Practice Standard 1
- Instructional shifts in English and Language Arts

Danielson Framework:
- 3E Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

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

“Teachable moments” that cultivate student perseverance skills:

“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)

Click picture to view perseverance in action.

http://alturl.com/2m8w7

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.

Complete are references available upon request.


Visit www.isbe.net to download this newsletter.