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 PowerPoints, 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 grade 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

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Writing and the Common Core for 6th Grade

The first Common Core Writing Standard calls for students to “write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.” The website mentioned in the article above contains a guide for helping students achieve that standard. This 254 page document contains a plethora of resources for on-demand writing of an argument/opinion.

To access the 6th-12th samples, begin on page 70 of the guide. Teachers will see samples of on-demand prompts, teacher directions, student samples as well as annotated comments and feedback. Informative/explanatory and narrative resources can be found at the same link as well.

Click on the following link to access the writing resources:
http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/student-writing-samples/

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Resources for the Content Areas in 6th Grade

The top article of this page describes the Achieve website that houses many resources for the classroom teacher who is looking to align lessons/units to the Common Core.

“The Making of a Scientist” by Richard Feynman is one example of a close reading lesson that is found on this website. This 6th grade lesson describes close reading strategies that teachers can use in all grade classrooms.

This 12 page 2-day lesson plan can be found at the following link:
http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/literacy-science-technical/

Source for Social Studies lesson samples:
http://www.achievethecore.org/ela-literacy-common-core/literacy-history-social-studies/
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 rele-

Sixth Grade Illustrative Mathematics

Mixing Concrete

A mixture of concrete is made up of sand and cement in a ratio of 5 : 3. How many cubic feet of each are needed to make 160 cubic feet of concrete mix?

This task aligns to content standard 6.RP.3.

This task also requires students to understand that they must explicitly make an assumption, and that for some contexts this is a reasonable assumption (e.g. mixing water with juice concentrate) and others it is completely inappropriate (e.g. mixing water and salt).

For more information: http://www.illustrativemathematics.org/illustrations/53

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.

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.

“...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)

Classroom Management

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(Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching)

Making Connections

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

Danielson Framework:
- 3E Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

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

Visit www.isbe.net to download this newsletter.