

The Common Core Approach To Lesson Structure

toolkits

Part One

Critical First Steps

Create alignment

Begin by building alignment within your department in your school, then broadening within your content area K-12. And finally, create an open dialogue across content areas within your year and/or school to do some curriculum mapping across the curriculums.

Identify standards that must be mastered at your grade level

Begin identifying the “key” standards that must be mastered at your grade level for that student to be successful to move to the next grade.

Create a working document that shows the level of progression through the year: units, standards to be addressed in that unit, formative assessments, and summative assessments. This document is often referred to as a scope and sequence, or a curriculum map. Whatever you call it, be sure that you can easily go back and change the document as things get added and dropped. Make notations to yourself on what needs to be changed in the coming years. Most importantly, this should be a document that can span from one grade level to the next, using similar formatting helps.

“Backwards” plan your units

Once you have an idea of where your year is headed and what standards will be addressed, decide on what exactly you need to have the students show mastery on for the summative assessment for that standard(s). Analyze the standard itself: what is it really asking the students to do? Breakdown the standard(s) into parts, decide on what should be completed to show basic mastery or get at least a “C” and then build from there.

For example the 8.RL.1 Standard (this stands for 8th grade Reading Literature 1 standard) says:

1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Corresponding College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standard

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text

What is the standard actually asking them to do?

- The easiest things are to understand the explicitly stated content.
- Then they need to be able to understand and make inferences.
- Finally, they need to find their own textual support to analyze those inferences with the key ideas from the text.

Here is a sample rubric:

	Apprentice 1/100	Basic 65/100	Proficient 75/100	Master 85/100	Expert 100/100
CCSS 8.RL.1 & 8.RI.1 Cite Textual Evidence	The student is not yet able to infer	The student is able to identify what the quote means but not infer and analyze the text.	The student is able to infer from the teacher-provided quotes, and analyze the text	The student is able to infer and analyze the text based on the teacher-provided quotes, as well as cite their own specific textual evidence to show further inference and analysis.	The student is able to infer and analyze the text based on the teacher-provided quotes, as well as cite their own specific textual evidence to show further inference and analysis. The student is also able to infer the theme of the text and apply their own understanding and life lesson learned from the story.

So to show proficiency in this standard, the student has to be able to infer from teacher-provided quotes from the text, to master the standard they must find quotes (or textual support) from the text and infer the meaning on their own without teacher guidance. Finally, looking at the key ideas (or in this case the theme of the text) is always implicitly stated. Once you have the summative assessment built you can then start looking at the vehicle (or the text) you will use to teach the concept, as well as what lessons and formative assessments should be taught leading up to the summative assessment ensuring that students will be able to pass the standard.

For example the 7.G.6 Standard (this stands for 7th grade Geometry 6 standard) says:

Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.

6. Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, volume and surface area of two- and three-dimensional objects composed of triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, cubes, and right prisms.

What is the standard actually asking them to do?

- The easiest things are to remember and identify the formulas for each of the two- and three-dimensional objects.
- Then they need to be able to solve problems involving angles, area, surface area, and volume for given problems and given information/measurements.
- Finally, they need to find angles, area, surface area, and volume for given story problems and/or real life examples.

Here is a sample rubric:

	Apprentice 1/100	Basic 65/100	Proficient 75/100	Master 85/100	Expert 100/100
CCSS 7.G.6 Solve real life problems on area and volume.	The student is not yet able to identify formulas for two- and three-dimensional objects	The student is able to identify formulas for two- and three dimensional objects but cannot solve problems using formulas	The student is able to identify formulas for two- and three dimensional objects and solve problems using formulas on several of the following: Angles Area Surface area Volume	The student is able to identify formulas for two- and three dimensional objects and solve problems using formulas on ALL of the following: Angles Area Surface area Volume	The student is able to identify formulas for two- and three dimensional objects and solve problems using formulas on ALL of the following: Angles Area Surface area Volume The student is also able to solve real-life examples and story problems

So to show proficiency in this standard, a student must be able to identify the formulas for two- and three-dimensional objects and use them to solve for a several of the following—angles, area, surface area, and volume—in order to get a “C” on the test and be proficient on the standard. To master the standard they must be able to apply all formulas. Finally, to be an expert on the standard, they need to be able to solve in real-life situations and on given story problems. Again, the brilliance of “backwards” planning allows you to clearly see what the end-point looks like and specifically what needs to be taught to get there. Even for someone unfamiliar with the standards, one can see that you need to first teach the formulas for each of those components and do a lot of practice in applying those formulas to different two- and three-dimensional objects, as well as in class practice on real life two- and three-dimensional objects. What kind of fun activities could you do on objects? Could you bring in a tent and

have the students take measurements and calculate the surface area? Could you bring in a storage tub and let them calculate volume? Will those be practice activities and then the test will be paper/pencil? Or could you potentially have it be half and half (paper/pencil and real life object analysis)?

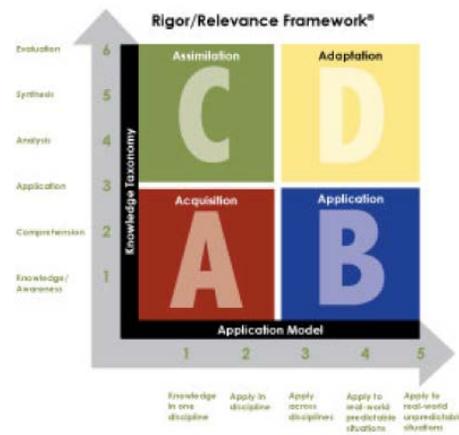
Once you know the end goal, you can start to plan your individual lessons. If you are in social studies, language arts, or even science: what texts will be needed to teach these concepts? In reference to the CCSS, there is a large emphasis on nonfiction and text complexity: allowing students to have access to more challenging materials that help build content and drive the mastery of the standard. What other skills are needed to master the standard? How can you “practice” those skills in the daily lessons? How will you formatively assess those skills?

What should you consider in the daily lessons?

- Think about your objectives, especially if you have ELL students in your class you need to be hitting the core targets of reading, writing, and speaking in every lesson.
- How will you keep the students engaged and motivated? While finding a text with a high level of complexity is pushed from the common core, you also must constantly be cognizant of the engagement of the lesson.
- How can my daily lessons be differentiated? Within the idea of thinking about each standard there is a depth of knowledge to be considered, how can we start to move some of the onus from the teacher centered classroom to the students?
- When considering pacing for the students, if you are allowing them to have multiple attempts at the standards, what do you do for those students that show mastery on their first attempt? Or on the opposite end of the spectrum, what do you do for those students that need several different tries/attempts with lots of re-teaching? This is where differentiation and pacing become important. For those students that do show mastery quicker, can you allow them to move on to a project-based learning activity, which would allow them to problem solve on their own with only occasional teacher interference or what some might call “coaching?” This would then free up your time to help with re-teaching those individuals that need additional teacher interaction.

Can you hit multiple standards in your summative assessment?

Unlike old state standards where you might address one standard per lesson, the Common Core lends itself to hitting multiple standards at once. Think about a way to move yourself from lessons in quadrant A and B in the Rigor/Relevance Framework, and instead begin pushing into those C and D categories (Quadrant D being the high goal). Quadrant D shows the student thinking and applying or working towards a solution to a problem. A well-designed lesson working on problem solving could address several Reading Standards, as well as several Speaking & Listening Standards, so begin looking at ways to incorporate several standards at once.



How can the text play a part in a great lesson plan in compliance with Common Core?

It's no secret that the Common Core pushes higher text complexity for students, pushing the idea of close-reading of a higher level Lexile texts. The idea that a student needs to possibly read a text several times in order to do a proper analysis—picking a text that is just challenging enough and yet engaging—is like finding the Holy Grail! The key to moving some of the onus of a student's education from the teacher to the student is in finding texts that are irresistible. When it is the right text, they will instantly start redirecting their focus to the text and task at hand than on the teacher's direction.