

**FROM THE COLLEGE AND CAREER READY STANDARDS
TO TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM:
A SERIES OF RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS**

CSAI-DEVELOPED CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION RESOURCES USER GUIDE FOR EDUCATION LEADERS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE USER GUIDE

The Center on Standards & Assessment Implementation (CSAI) has developed a series of resources to assist teachers and those who support teachers to plan teaching and learning of College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) for all students. Each resource in the series supports implementation of the standards by addressing both theory and practice – allowing educators to understand the value of the new approach to learning, and also offering practical tools and templates to establish new practices for integrating the standards into instruction. This series of nine documents, taken together, helps teachers take ownership of the standards, understand them deeply, and implement them effectively in the classroom.

The resource series is designed to help teachers shape new pedagogical practices in support of students' attainment of the deeper learning called for in CCRS, including students' acquisition of important skills such as communication, collaboration, and self-monitoring (National Research Council, 2013).

The series begins with a guide for teachers to consider deeper learning through a new learning framework, called Fundamentals of Learning, which outlines the role of students as learners. Building from contemporary theories of learning reflected in this resource, teachers are supported to use a series of templates and tools that provide guidance to (a) understand the standards, (b) arrange and sequence sets of standards, and (c) sequence key standards to identify the progression of learning within each standard. The final resources in the series use what teachers have learned about standards to construct lessons that include formative assessment, a key pedagogical practice that supports deeper learning. The authors of these resources drew on their understanding of leading theory and research about learning and formative assessment and from an examination of CCRS to create these tools and processes. A section of resources for further study is included at the end of this User Guide.

The principles of learning and pedagogy that are reflected in these resources apply to all students. While there may be differences in the learning needs of some subgroups or individual students, for example English learners or students with disabilities, the instructional practices illustrated in the resources support learning for all students, such as developing effective learning progressions, establishing Learning Goals and Success Criteria, and using feedback to provide minute-by-minute and day-by-day feedback.

This User Guide is designed for district and school instructional leaders to identify the right resources to engage with at their sites and to provide guidance on the use of these resources in their settings.

It is organized into four sections:

1. Selecting the right resources for teachers
2. Designing effective professional learning for teachers – planning for implementation
3. Designing effective professional learning for teachers – leading professional learning with the CSAI resources
4. Leading implementation over time

SELECTING THE RIGHT RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Over the past few years, many schools and districts have led or participated in significant professional development around the new standards. The first task for district and school leaders who are planning to use the CSAI resources is

to decide on those that would be most appropriate for their teachers. The right resources will provide teachers with opportunities to take next steps in understanding and using the standards in their classrooms.

The following table outlines the title, content focus, and potential uses of each of the CSAI resources. Note that the concepts and ideas in the CSAI series build on one another, and therefore, the simplest application is to start with the first document (*Fundamentals of Learning*) and then introduce subsequent resources over time.

Alternatively, each CSAI resource also stands on its own, so that district and school leaders can determine one (or more) that will meet their current professional learning needs.

Resource title	Content focus	Use this resource if ...
<p><i>Fundamentals of Learning</i></p>	<p>Provides a framework which outlines three essential components of learning that underpin classroom practice for K-12 students' attainment of CCRS. These elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Making Meaning (2) Participating and Contributing (3) Managing Learning <p>Detailed illustrations of what the three components look like during teaching and learning are provided. This is a useful resource for reflecting on current practice and considering core instructional practices that address these Fundamentals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators could benefit from examining key ideas in contemporary learning theory and research and what learning theory and research look like in practice. • It would be useful for teachers to reflect on which of these practices need to be developed or extended in their own classrooms in the context of CCRS. • Teachers could benefit from learning more about the role of students as learners.
<p><i>Getting a Handle on the Standards</i></p>	<p>This resource is designed to provide guidance on the shifts and architecture of the ELA and math CCRS, and to begin the process of content review. It includes a process for teachers to use to review their own standards. It ends with a process to analyze current resources and instructional materials in light of the learning expectations outlined in CCRS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be useful for teachers to engage in a group process in order to develop shared understanding about CCRS. • Educators would benefit from a careful analysis of the alignment between curricula/materials used for previous standards and if they are appropriate for new standards. • A refresher on new standards would benefit teachers after a period of implementation.
<p><i>What's Learned First, What's Learned Together? Developing a Yearlong Plan from the K-8 College and Career Ready Standards for Mathematical Content</i></p> <p><i>What's Learned First, What's Learned Together? Developing a Yearlong Plan from the K-12 College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy</i></p>	<p>The two <i>What's Learned First</i> resources take teachers through a process to organize and arrange content standards into a meaningful yearlong sequence of learning. This resource is organized into two documents, one with examples specific to K- 12 Literacy/ELA and one specific to K-8 math.</p> <p>In addition to content-based exemplars, these resources outline a collaborative process through which teachers explore how students come to learn the standards. Through this carefully structured dialogue, teachers create</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators have not planned a yearlong roadmap that establishes a sequence of instruction for CCRS. • Educators would benefit from additional analysis of the connections between and among standards and clusters of standards. • Educators have requested support in creating lessons from the standards.

Resource title	Content focus	Use this resource if ...
	<p>a sequence to structure student learning throughout the academic year.</p> <p>The math resource contains an additional process to guide teachers through steps to combine mathematics content and practice standards for both daily lessons and long-term planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are not yet certain how the math practice standards and the mathematical content standards work together.
<p><i>Building Blocks, Learning Goals, and Success Criteria: Planning Instruction and Formative Assessment for K-8 Math Standards</i></p> <p><i>Building Blocks, Learning Goals and Success Criteria: Planning Instruction and Formative Assessment for K-12 ELA/Literacy Standards</i></p>	<p>These two resources – one for ELA and one for math - assist teachers in moving from the Yearlong Plan (completed in <i>What’s Learned First</i>) to planning for daily classroom instruction.</p> <p>Teachers first explore how to develop Building Blocks from standards – smaller chunks of the standards that can be used to organize and sequence instruction. Teachers then use a process to establish student Learning Goals and Success Criteria from the Building Blocks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators would benefit from mapping the intermediate steps that students need to take as they progress from standards at one grade-level to the next grade-level. Teachers are not yet proficient at using standards to plan unit and lesson goals. It would be helpful for teachers to consider how lesson Learning Goals connect to each other over a series of lessons. Teachers are ready to learn how to create lesson goals for the math practice standards in conjunction with the content standards.
<p><i>Developing and Refining Lessons: Planning Learning and Formative Assessment for Math College and Career Ready Standards</i></p> <p><i>Developing and Refining Lessons: Planning Learning and Formative Assessment for English Language Arts College and Career Ready Standards (coming soon)</i></p>	<p>These two resources provide guidance for teachers in the design of lessons that support student learning of math and ELA CCRS. These resources emphasize the formative assessment process in lesson planning, building on the earlier work in Learning Goals and Success Criteria to help teachers plan for eliciting evidence of learning and involving students in assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators would benefit from understanding how to use key elements of formative assessment, in particular, how to plan for effectively eliciting evidence of student learning. Teachers are seeking new ways to provide in-the-moment feedback to students. Educators have not yet planned lessons aligned with CCRS that include the key elements of formative assessment. Teachers would like information on how to effectively involve students in their own assessment.
<p><i>Supporting Students in Close Reading</i></p>	<p>This resource guides teachers in the process of instructional planning for close reading with students. It focuses on enabling students to deeply engage with high quality, challenging texts so that they will achieve key goals of CCRS by being able to read, comprehend, and evaluate increasingly complex text independently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators have asked for support or resources to analyze texts in order to select the appropriate texts for close reading with their students. Teachers would like to know more about developing text-dependent questions to support deep understanding of text. Teachers would like to develop skills to implement formative assessment in the context of close reading.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS – PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Once they have determined which CSAI resources best support teachers' current professional Learning Goals and needs, leaders should plan for the implementation process. This suite of resources is designed to engage teachers in sustained, ongoing, collaborative work. This is true whether users decide to engage with a single resource as a one-time support for a particular standards-review process or whether multiple resources are used over time.

The CSAI resources support high quality professional learning through several key design principles. For example, the use of structured protocols to guide dialogue honors the contributions and expertise of teachers. Similarly, each resource includes current examples from practice and research-based guidance. Key concepts are revisited through research, exemplars, and protocols, in order to ensure that educators reflect on their developing knowledge and skills over time. In other words, these resources contain foundational elements for effective professional learning – but they are most useful when a plan for implementation is clearly established.

The following criteria and questions will guide pre-implementation planning for use of the CSAI resources:

- *Align learning outcomes to teachers' current learning needs.*
 - Has there been recent analysis that shows evidence related to current implementation of CCRS?
 - What is known about where educators feel CCRS implementation is going well?
 - What is known about where CCRS implementation has been more challenging?
 - Is there a shared understanding of learning needs – by teachers and leaders – to guide professional learning?
 - To what extent have all or most teachers in the school site moved from understanding standards, to planning lessons with standards, to changing classroom instruction based on new standards?
- *Clarify expectations for use of the materials that teachers develop from these resources.*
 - What will teachers be expected to do with the materials they develop from the CSAI resources and protocols?
 - In what ways will teachers be expected to change practice – either to use the completed resources they develop to guide ongoing instructional planning or to change instructional practices in fundamental ways?
- *Identify how and when follow-up implementation will take place.*
 - How will the school/district provide sufficient opportunities for teacher dialogue to implement the processes outlined in the selected resources?
 - When will follow-up and opportunities for reflection be scheduled to ensure ongoing review of this work?

- *Ensure that this work is aligned with existing improvement and Learning Goals.*
 - How will this work be aligned with other school/district improvement and professional Learning Goals?
 - Is there a mechanism in place for teachers participating in this work to review alignment of other professional learning initiatives?
 - Have specific learning outcomes been established for this work?
- *Outline structures for ongoing dialogue to support this work.*
 - What existing structures are in place for collaborative dialogue so that teachers can explore their shared understandings of planning and teaching with the new standards?
 - How will current times for teacher dialogue (e.g., PLCs, department meetings, grade-level teams) be used to support this work? Will additional time be provided (e.g., release time, paid time)?

Additional resources for further study are included at the end of this User Guide.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS – LEADING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WITH THE CSAI RESOURCES

For each of the CSAI resources, there is a general four-step structure to their use in professional learning.

- 1) **Introduce the materials** to help teachers become familiar with the ideas and processes outlined in the resource. This introduction may involve teachers reading the resource ahead of a session.
- 2) Teachers **practice the protocols** or processes outlined in the resource together, in an environment where they can ask questions and practice with the tools. For example, teachers may study the standards further in order to evaluate curriculum alignment and plan lessons, analyze and select text for close reading, adjust classroom routines/and culture, or plan a lesson that includes formative assessment.
- 3) Teachers **apply the protocols** and processes in their own environment, either with a grade-level team or in their classroom.
- 4) Teachers **reflect** with colleagues on what they are learning, and then take that learning back to the classroom in the form of more effective instruction.

The resources themselves provide explicit instructions for steps 1 and 2 above, and largely leave steps 3 and 4 to the discretion of the district or school. Implementation of the resources is enhanced when teachers have opportunities to provide feedback to one another, engage in self-reflection, and revise their analyses, plans, and strategies. Teachers can also loop back to work on particular resources or processes over time, even in subsequent years, to go deeper in their learning.

This design aligns with key principles of effective professional development as an ongoing, reflective process, that supports teachers to focus on issues specific to their own content and encourages strong working relationships among teachers. From an implementation perspective, leaders will need to make decisions about how and when

to integrate the resources to align with these principles. The following framing ideas can help support overall implementation, particularly steps 3 and 4 as outlined above.

- *Consider each resource independently to allocate adequate time and to establish an appropriate structure for teacher learning.*

Each resource varies in intensity and design. *Fundamentals of Learning* could be reviewed and discussed at a faculty meeting with some questions provided to guide the reading. *What's Learned First* could be structured in a multi-day summer institute, or the content could be taught in one day and then teachers work together on the process throughout the school year. As each document is reviewed, it is also worthwhile to determine effective teacher grouping strategies. Some documents benefit from collaborative work with colleagues who teach the same content, others require vertical teams, and yet others can be done in cross-discipline or cross-grade teams.

- *Capitalize on instructional leaders and content experts.*

Involving instructional leaders and content experts in these standards-review sessions has significant benefits, not just at these meetings, but also in the implementation of the standards over time. At their heart, these sessions should promote rich dialogue amongst teachers about how their students learn that will increase teachers' content knowledge. A challenge in many sites is not having enough content experts to go around, so it will be important to organize experts' time so as to ensure that they can visit as many working teams as possible. Content expert involvement is helpful in workshops and team meetings that take place during the school day - consider this need regardless of implementation model.

- *Build in time for ongoing reflection.*

In many districts and schools, finding time for teacher reflection is easier to say than to do. With many competing demands for time, it can be hard to structure consistent times for reflection on practice. The power of these resources and protocols is amplified when teachers use them over time and revisit earlier work. There is power in this both from the accountability perspective (people are much more likely to implement a new practice if there is a built-in expectation that its implementation will be discussed with peers) as well as from the learning perspective. After using a protocol to develop Building Blocks, for instance, teachers who come back to that same work a year later to explore how their thinking played out in practice gain additional understanding about standards, instruction, and impact.

- *Use the protocols and processes as outlined in the guides.*

The protocols and processes outlined in the CSAI resources are designed to guide teams to engage in important work and learn along the way. The protocols offer step-by-step guidance that will keep teams on track towards completing the work and will offer teams opportunities for reflection and learning. While the products that teachers complete in most of the resources offer guidance and support for instructional planning, building shared knowledge is one of the core reasons to do this work.

- Consider both existing and new structures for collaborative dialogue.

A key feature of effective professional learning is that it is “job-embedded.” Consider having teachers engage in the resources during grade-level, department, or other existing internal models for professional learning time, such as professional learning communities. A caveat, however, is that this work can’t be easily done if those existing meetings are already over scheduled with other important tasks. If this is the case, either consider what can be eliminated from the current meeting schedule or find other time to meet. New structures for dialogue might include use of substitutes, faculty meetings, or use of teacher professional development days.

LEADING IMPLEMENTATION OVER TIME - EVALUATE, DOCUMENT, AND CELEBRATE CHANGES IN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

Research¹ recognizes the importance of school leaders in ensuring quality teaching and learning environments for students and for teachers. Leaders create a culture of learning by providing supportive conditions for teacher growth, “trying out” what they are learning from the resources, and collaborating with their colleagues. A strong commitment to building trust and cooperation is essential to the growth of the school as a learning organization.

If teachers are engaged in learning opportunities structured by the school leadership, it is important that leaders clearly show commitment to, and support for, teachers’ efforts, especially when they may involve making changes from current practice. Below are some ways in which school leaders can provide ongoing acknowledgment and support and establish internal accountability for this work.²

- Provide additional opportunities for coaches, department heads, or teacher leaders to learn how to support their teacher colleagues while they are implementing these resources. Such efforts might involve walk-through observations and providing feedback, or exploring how the resource content aligns with the district/school’s existing teacher evaluation model.
- Use the district/school’s existing teacher evaluation model to recognize teacher progress in implementing the practices teachers are learning about in the resources and with their teams. Identify teacher leaders who can help their colleagues take advantage of what they are learning about through PLCs or other professional learning structures in the school.
- Visit classrooms and talk with teachers and students about their learning and about what is changing as they adopt the approaches and practices outlined in the resources. Use these visits as an opportunity to provide feedback to teachers that will encourage their ongoing learning and refinement of their practice.
- Share observations at grade-level, department, or full faculty meetings to acknowledge successes and efforts. Celebrate what teachers are learning and the impact this work is having on students.
- Create multiple opportunities for teachers to share their progress. In a school, this might take the form of teachers sharing their practice at department, team, or faculty meetings. A district might have regular communication channels to highlight the work of particular teachers/schools.
- Routinely seek information from teachers about what additional support they need.

¹References in Resources for Further Study at the end of this Guide

²Adapted from Gerzon, 2015

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