

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE COMMON CORE:

ALIGNING STANDARDS FOR TEACHING
WITH STANDARDS FOR LEARNING

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The System for Teacher
and Student Advancement

A NEW DIRECTION FOR SUCCESS

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Introduction

As states and districts adopt more challenging standards for students outlined in the Common Core State Standards (Common Core), teachers must align classroom instruction to new student learning standards. To be successful in this transition, states and districts must support teachers in understanding the instructional practices that enable students to master the Common Core, in improving their classroom instructional skills, and ensuring that teacher evaluation requirements reflect the new expectations.

In its practical implementation, Common Core's focus is on setting higher and more consistent expectations for student learning. A complementary set of standards is therefore needed that focuses on improving teacher effectiveness, as research demonstrates that effective teaching is the most important school based factor in driving student achievement (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rowan, 2002; Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

This paper explores how the TAP Teaching Standards, and the specific instructional practices they describe, enable teachers to more effectively teach to the Common Core. The paper explains the need for and advantages of this connection between standards for teaching and learning in three sections: 1) an explanation of the Common Core standards; 2) an explanation of effective teaching practices; 3) the alignment between Common Core State Standards and TAP Teaching Standards. The paper also describes how states and districts can use the TAP Teaching Standards to ensure that teacher evaluation systems are aligned with Common Core requirements.

Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA), and is currently supported by 45 states and the District of Columbia. The initiative's goal is to have common educational standards in math and English-language arts for students at each grade level, regardless of the state in which they live. Student assessments aligned to the Common Core are currently being developed, and these new tests are slated to be implemented in the 2014–15 school year.

According to the NGA and CCSSO, “We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common Core standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 1). In other words, it is no longer acceptable that students in different states learn at different rates. One purpose of the Common Core is to provide continuity and skills alignment for students regardless of where they attend school, and another purpose is to ensure that parents and teachers know what students are supposed to learn. Common Core standards:

- » Help to ensure that students receive a high-quality education consistently, from state to state and school to school.
- » Provide a clear benchmark for students regardless of where they live.
- » Lay out a clear and consistent framework to prepare students for college and the workforce.

These standards are intended to respond to the constantly changing nature of America and the global economy. Twenty-five years ago, 95% of jobs required low skills; today, low-skill jobs constitute only 10% of the United States' economy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2008). Instead of a ‘skill and drill’ education, the Common Core requires rigorous higher-level thinking in clearly designed standards with central goals.

Standards for instructional content help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success, and also allow teachers to build the best lessons and environments for their classrooms. Standards are a first step—a key building block—in providing our young people with a high-quality education that prepares them for success in college and work. “Of course, standards are not the only thing that is needed for our children’s success,” the CCSSO notes, “but they provide an accessible roadmap for our teachers, parents, and students” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., p. 3). Standards do not tell teachers how to teach, but they do help teachers figure out the knowledge and skills their students need. A vital element in a transition to new standards is teacher support, including evaluation and professional development.

Common Core Implementation

According to a report from Education First and the EPE Research Center, “the majority of states reported that they have at least begun the process of developing plans to align their systems by: providing professional development to teachers (45 states), changing or devising curriculum guides and other instructional materials (35 states), and revising their teacher-evaluation systems (38 states)” (Porter et al., 2012, p. 2). After Common Core’s initial implementation, “the focus of attention has shifted toward issues related to

practical implementation, such as the readiness of teachers to actually enact the new standards in the classroom” (Porter et al., 2012, p. 2). The reality of implementing the Common Core standards in schools has revealed a need to support teachers through a structured system that includes clear assistance for evaluating and improving their instruction.

One key survey question posed was: *Has your state developed a plan to create or revise teacher-evaluation systems to hold educators accountable for students’ mastery of the Common Core?* (Porter et al., 2012). Results showed that 30 of the 46 states expect to change their teacher-evaluation systems. Additionally, 38 states that have adopted the Common Core have completed—or are working on—plans to create or revise teacher-evaluation systems to hold teachers accountable for their students’ mastery of the new standards (Porter et al., 2012). The majority of states are in the process of incorporating a focus on teacher evaluation to more successfully align with the expectations of the Common Core.

Aligning teacher-evaluation systems to students’ mastery of the CCSS [Common Core State Standards] represents another step states might take to ensure [that] the new standards are being taught in the classroom. The timing of such initiatives may be particularly fortuitous, as many states are already working to redesign evaluation systems to include student learning as a measure of teacher effectiveness. In many states, CCSS adoption coincided with a spirited debate among policymakers over how best to utilize information from longitudinal data systems to link individual teachers to their students’ test results. Many of the primary factors state leaders have considered in determining whether or how to incorporate student test scores into teacher evaluations may be unrelated to, or predate, the movement toward common academic-content standards. However, the timing of adoption of the CCSS does correspond with the implementation of new teacher-evaluation systems in many states (Porter et al., 2012, p. 12).

Many states have cited teacher-related challenges in their transitions to the Common Core, including developing educator-evaluation systems to hold teachers and principals accountable for student mastery of the standards (Kober & Stark Renter, 2012).

A survey by the Center for Education Policy showed that “many [school] districts face major challenges due to inadequate or unclear state guidance about modifying teacher evaluation systems to hold teachers accountable for students’ mastery of the standards” (Kober & Stark Renter, 2011, p. 2). In that survey, an estimated 30% of districts reported designing or planning to design a teacher-evaluation system to hold teachers accountable for student mastery of the Common Core (Kober & Stark Renter, 2011). Half agreed or strongly agreed that the Common Core requires fundamental changes in instruction in both math and English-language arts (Kober & Stark Renter, 2011). These changes consequently require support for teachers and a structure for teacher evaluation aligned to the Common Core.

Beyond the feedback from states and districts, the meta-analysis from Martone and Sireci (2009) concludes that the evidence on the importance of alignment among curriculum, assessment and instruction is uniform and should be heeded. Without clear connections between and among the desired curriculum, methods of assessing success and ways to develop teacher proficiencies, improvements in student outcomes are unlikely. Efforts to advance a Common Core curriculum would greatly benefit by incorporating a system for teacher professional support and evaluation that has proven successful in improving instruction and that corresponds to improvements in student achievement.

TAP Teaching Standards

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP System)—overseen by the nonprofit National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET)—consists of four interrelated elements aimed at improving instruction. The TAP System has effectively raised student achievement, improved the quality of instruction and increased the ability of high-need schools to recruit, retain and support teachers (Daley & Kim, 2012; Eckert, 2013; Hudson, 2010; Jerald, 2009; Solmon, White, Cohen, & Woo, 2007). One primary element of the TAP System is instructionally focused accountability for teachers achieved through a clear and transparent set of rubrics known as the TAP Teaching Standards. Developed through the examination of various state and national teacher organizations’ research-based evaluation rubrics and education psychology research, the TAP Teaching Standards are a comprehensive set of twenty-six indicators describing effective instruction, operationalized on a five-point rubric. They include four domains, each of which is grounded in research: Instruction (e.g., Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Glen & Dotger, 2009; Rivet & Krajcik, 2008), Learning Environment (e.g., Allday, 2011; Matsumara, Slater, & Crosson, 2008; Ponitz, Rimm-Kaufman, & Brock, 2009), Designing and Planning (e.g., Anghileri, 2006; Marshall & Horton, 2011; Timperley & Parr, 2009) and Responsibilities (e.g., Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009). Table 1 includes a detailed list of the indicators included in each domain.

Table 1 TAP Teaching Standards

INSTRUCTION	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standards and Objectives* 2. Motivating Students* 3. Presenting Instructional Content* 4. Lesson Structure and Pacing* 5. Activities and Materials* 6. Questioning* 7. Academic Feedback* 8. Grouping Students* 9. Teacher Content Knowledge* 10. Teacher Knowledge of Students* 11. Thinking* 12. Problem Solving* 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expectations* 2. Managing Student Behavior* 3. Environment* 4. Respectful Culture*
DESIGNING AND PLANNING INSTRUCTION	RESPONSIBILITIES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional Plans 2. Student Work 3. Assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff Development** 2. Instructional Supervision** 3. Mentoring** 4. Community Involvement** 5. School Responsibilities** 6. Growing and Developing Professionally 7. Reflecting on Teaching

* Indicates criteria that are evaluated during classroom observations.

** Indicates criteria that are applied only to master and mentor teachers.

The power of the TAP Teaching Standards is improving school instructional capacity not only through evaluation, but also through mentoring and coaching.

TAP teachers are observed in classroom instruction several times a year by multiple trained observers, including principals and master and mentor teachers, using rubrics for several dimensions of instructional quality. Evaluators are trained and certified, and leadership teams monitor the reliability and consistency of evaluations in their schools. These classroom evaluations are complemented by [a] value-added analysis of student achievement growth, rounding out a multi-measure system of teacher evaluation. Evaluation results are used as formative feedback in one-on-one mentoring sessions, and guide planning for cluster group meetings (Daley & Kim, 2012, p. 2).

Data from TAP schools indicates that classroom evaluations based on TAP standards align with student achievement outcomes as measured by value-added calculations. This means that teachers who align their instruction to the TAP standards have students who demonstrate consistent achievement growth.

TAP's evaluation ratings of teacher skills in the classroom are positively correlated to value-added scores showing the teacher's impact on student achievement gains. Using data for TAP teachers in ten states for school years 2007–2008 to 2009–2010, we have identified a positive relationship between a teacher's score from classroom evaluations and the same teacher's score from value-added assessment[s] of student learning (Daley & Kim, 2012, p. 11).

Adherence to TAP Teaching Standards produces student-learning gains through a comprehensive, site-based system with specific practical elements to support teachers and to improve teaching and learning in the classroom (Daley & Kim, 2010). Given this data on increased student achievement gains, the TAP Teaching Standards provide a complementary instructional focus to the student-focused Common Core standards.

Alignment Between the Common Core State Standards and the TAP Teaching Standards

Having common standards across states and across grades makes intuitive sense. As Bill Gates told the *Wall Street Journal*, “It’s ludicrous to think that multiplication in Alabama and multiplication in New York are really different” (Riley, 2011). Although the idea is logical in theory, the application of common standards can uncover practical issues with instruction. Confirming this hunch, a recent report by the Brown Center on Education Policy concluded that no correlation between rigorous student standards and student achievement exists (Loveless, 2012). Through analyzing states’ past experience with standards and studying several years of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), researchers concluded that—despite the money and effort devoted to developing the Common Core State Standards—a significant improvement in student learning is not foreseen (Loveless, 2012). These findings support the meta-analysis on the impact of misaligned reforms conducted by Martone and Sireci (2009). Clearly, a critical piece of the Common Core curriculum-reform puzzle lies in the incorporation of a teacher support and evaluation system to address student mastery.

Assessments give us crucial information on what is and is not working for student learning. But we need to analyze and evaluate instruction to understand how to improve student learning. Those within education must continually assess adults as carefully as they do students. If student performance is expected to improve, then teachers, too, must be willing to take risks, make mistakes and receive formative feedback that leads to their improved performance. For teachers and leaders to improve, they must receive monitoring and feedback that meet the same criteria (Reeves, 2011).

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement is an example of an integrated system for teacher evaluation and support. In the TAP System, each teacher is evaluated four to six times a year during announced and unannounced observations by multiple trained and certified evaluators using the TAP Teaching Standards. Prior to announced evaluations, evaluators meet with teachers for a pre-conference to discuss the upcoming evaluation. All evaluations are followed up with a post-conference session between the observed teacher and the evaluator to discuss evidence-based reinforcements and refinements intended to help the teacher strengthen his/her instructional practice (www.tapsystem.org). TAP classroom observations are combined with value-added assessments to provide a picture of teacher performance (Daley & Kim, 2010).

The research is clear: without a high-quality teacher in the classroom, students do not demonstrate learning gains. The research is also clear that teachers need specific feedback and guidance (Goldhaber, 2002; Good et al., 2006; Harris & Sass, 2007; Jordan, Mendro & Weerasinghe, 1997; Rice, 2003). The TAP Teaching Standards are based on research and best practices that have identified teacher behaviors proven to be effective in student learning. The TAP standards do not, however, specify the academic content that teachers are expected to teach. The intent of the TAP Teaching Standards is to be curriculum neutral, adapting to any set of student standards; in fact, a key priority is ensuring that instruction is aligned to individual state or district requirements. This flexibility allows the TAP Teaching Standards to be applied to myriad content areas and grade levels while still providing a specific structure for effective instruction.

Near Minneapolis, Minnesota, Partnership Academy Principal Lisa Hendricks notes that “Common Core Standards call for more rigor and more relevancy, reasoning, and relationships in teaching, which we find are tough to do simultaneously. Although through TAP’s cluster group meetings and the teacher modeling of lessons, all of our teachers become more effective at encouraging inquiry, curiosity, and exploring information, which helps our students.”

The TAP Teaching Standards are supported by a growing body of research evidence that demonstrates the validity and reliability of the rubrics in accurately measuring teachers' instructional performance, which leads to improved student performance (Hudson, 2010; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013; Solmon, White, Cohen & Woo, 2007). Tested in a dozen states across the nation and hundreds of schools within those states, TAP's instructional standards complement and support state or local student standards and produce demonstrated student achievement gains.

Like the TAP standards, the Common Core provides a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. Both sets of standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that teachers need to ensure that young people are successful in college and in their careers.

Table 2 shows how the TAP Teaching Standards align broadly and philosophically with the Common Core. The appendix provides a more detailed discussion of the alignment between the TAP standards and the Common Core standards.

Table 2

The TAP Teaching Standards and the Common Core State Standards

1. Are aligned with college and work expectations	<i>The TAP Teaching Standards assess teacher practices that are aligned to the skills needed for students to be successful in higher education and in their careers. For example, TAP rubrics assess teachers' abilities to teach critical thinking and problem-solving, skills that are aligned with both college and work expectations. Students in effective TAP teacher classrooms are also exposed to a variety of learning structures such as grouping, which focuses on collaboration and working effectively with others.</i>
2. Are clear, understandable and consistent	<i>The TAP Teaching Standards are a set of clear, transparent and consistent standards by which to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Teachers are trained extensively on the TAP rubric and there is a continued focus on ensuring inter-rater reliability in evaluations. The TAP System has developed a structure through the school leadership team that ensures clarity and the understanding of expected standards by all teachers.</i>
3. Are focused on rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order skills	<i>The TAP Teaching Standards are rigorous in the application of higher-order skills, particularly in selecting activities and materials for students that are challenging and elicit a variety of thinking. In the TAP rubric, the indicators of Thinking and Problem-Solving challenge students to analyze, compare and contrast, evaluate and explain information. The indicator of Questioning encourages teachers to incorporate questions for their students at the knowledge/comprehension, application/analysis and creation/evaluation levels.</i>
4. Are built upon the strengths and lessons of current state standards	<i>The TAP Teaching Standards were developed through consultation with numerous educators at the local, state and national levels. The work reviewed included guidelines and standards developed by The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards, Massachusetts' Principles for Effective Teaching, California's Standards for the Teaching Profession, Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support Program, The New Teacher Center's Teacher Induction Program Development, and Danielson's Framework for Teaching.</i>
5. Are informed by other top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society	<i>The TAP Teaching Standards utilize research drawn from many sources, including international studies (e.g., Harvey-Beavis, 2003; Lavy, 2003, 2004).</i>
6. Are evidence-based	<i>The TAP Teaching Standards emerged from an extensive review of evidence on teacher standards and are consistently confirmed through ongoing research (e.g., Allday, 2011; Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010; Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Glen & Dotger, 2009; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Rivet & Krajcik, 2008; Timperley & Parr, 2009).</i>

Conclusion

Any set of goals or standards are only as high in quality as the instruction associated with them. The Common Core State Standards define what students need to know; however, they do not define how teachers must teach to meet the high cognitive demands of these new standards. Rigorous expectations require exemplary teaching methods and an understanding that the teacher, not the standard, is the most important variable affecting student achievement.

In Ascension Parish Schools in Louisiana, Superintendent Dr. Patrice Pujol explained, “TAP has helped us to figure out how we support teachers as they support students to meet new Common Core standards. We don’t just urge them to teach to the Common Core. We support them in developing their own skills and student strategies that specifically meet the new learning targets. We measure student work, and we help them to adjust as needed with the support of coaches that guide the process.”

The effective implementation of high-quality teaching standards, such as the TAP Teaching Standards, can provide the pathway to meeting the highly rigorous cognitive levels of the Common Core, producing a powerful alignment of curriculum, assessment and instruction. In addition, the TAP Teaching Standards provide an integrated system for teacher evaluation and support. Research shows that a well-designed, integrated system can be objective, rigorous, differentiated, multidimensional, linked to student learning and supportive of teacher improvement (Daley & Kim, 2010, 2012; Mann, Leutscher, & Reardon, 2013). Based on data from TAP schools, research shows that:

- » Teacher evaluations provide differentiated feedback on teacher performance.
- » Classroom evaluations are aligned with value-added student achievement outcomes.
- » Teachers become more effective over time.

The Common Core State Standards and the TAP Teaching Standards actively complement and enrich each other through an aligned implementation and a focus on student mastery, teacher evaluation and support. In order to reach the higher achievement levels in the Common Core we must also define and create systems to support teachers in reaching higher levels of teaching excellence.

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Appendix: Detailed Alignment of TAP Teaching Standards and Common Core State Standards

DESCRIPTION OF TAP TEACHING STANDARD	ALIGNMENT TO COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
INSTRUCTION DOMAIN	
<p>Standards and Objectives Planning effective lessons aligned to standards depends upon a teacher's ability to create and communicate clearly defined learning outcomes appropriate for students, and to make connections in learning. Both students and teachers should understand what is to be accomplished during each lesson and show evidence of mastery of the objective.</p>	<p><i>Because of the depth of the Common Core, teachers need to deconstruct or 'unwrap' each standard to determine its sub-skills. These sub-skills and the standard's major objective need to be explicitly communicated to students to set the purpose for their learning. The Common Core embraces the notion that literacy is everyone's work and that these connections are powerful. The same rich critical reading and writing work that happens in ELA needs to be present across the curriculum. The Common Core is based on a mastery model of learning whereby students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in each year's grade-specific standard and further advance their knowledge and skills as they progress through the grades (CCSS, 2010, p. 8).</i></p>
<p>Motivating Students This TAP teaching indicator focuses on the ability of teachers to organize and present content in a manner that is personally relevant to the students and encourages inquiry, curiosity and exploration.</p>	<p><i>The Common Core standards not only increase the level of rigor but also emphasize the importance of relevancy, reasoning and relationships. By making these powerful connections with core content areas (science, social studies/history and technical subjects), teachers make evident the critical relationships between literacy and all subjects. Students better understand the interconnections between subjects, therefore making the content more personally relevant. Common Core teachers need to match text appropriately—considering students' knowledge, motivation and experiences—so students develop a deep understanding of complex text.</i></p>
<p>Presenting Instructional Content It is important that teachers clearly communicate performance expectations in a concise and logically sequenced manner, with no irrelevant or confusing information. Effective teachers must be able to model the desired outcomes for their students.</p>	<p><i>An important strategy for improving student achievement is to ensure that the initial presentation of content in the classroom is strategically crafted and taught. Educators should explicitly model their expectations and desired outcomes for each Common Core standard for their students. Because of the standards' depth, it is crucial that teachers logically sequence the sub-skills of each to master the lesson's major objective.</i></p>
<p>Lesson Structure and Pacing To allow for sufficient student learning time, teachers must effectively segment and pace lessons in a way that best supports student learning. It is important that teachers know the various learning needs of their students and that the lesson provides enough time for students to progress at their various rates of learning.</p>	<p><i>Segmenting and pacing a lesson depends on teachers' knowledge of their students and their various learning needs. Because of the spiraling of the Common Core and the depth of each standard, teachers need to 'unwrap' or deconstruct the standards to make clear the concepts and skills embedded within, and plan smaller instructional learning progressions. Through analyzing the formative assessments tied to the deconstructed standards, teachers can better understand the learning needs of their students and structure lessons to best support student learning.</i></p>
<p>Activities and Materials By using a variety of materials and activities, teachers can address various learning styles and intelligences. Teachers should choose materials and activities that clearly support the lesson objectives and are related to the needs of the students. To sustain students' attention and elicit a variety of thinking, the activities and materials within a lesson should be challenging and provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction.</p>	<p><i>The Common Core standards are rigorous and require higher-level cognitive thinking. Educators need to ensure that the activities and materials utilized by students during lessons align with the demands of the standards. The standards require that the materials sustain students' attention and elicit a variety of thinking. Students are challenged to question, elaborate and communicate to deepen their understanding of concepts. This requires classrooms where students engage in student-to-student interactions and collaborations while utilizing a variety of materials and participating in activities that support the lesson's objective.</i></p> <p><i>The ELA Common Core's 'portrait of students who meet the standard' includes, "They use technology and digital media strategically and capably," which connects to the incorporation of multimedia and technology in the Activities and Materials indicator on the TAP rubric.</i></p>
<p>Questioning and Academic Feedback These two TAP teaching indicators provide a framework for the types of questions to ask within a lesson and how teachers respond to students' comments and questions. The indicators also address how teachers use student questions and feedback to make adjustments in instruction. Teachers are encouraged to engage and plan for student-to-student academic feedback and questioning.</p>	<p><i>Starting as early as the kindergarten level, it is important for teachers to model effective questioning and academic feedback for students. It should be clear that how we speak to each other and how we listen to each other are equally important. The Common Core requires teachers to increase the rigor of their questioning and create classroom environments that encourage high-quality academic feedback. Students are required to infer, analyze, explain and defend their answers. By allowing students to answer their peers' questions and provide their peers with academic feedback, teachers encourage different perspectives and reinforce the idea that more than one response may be correct.</i></p> <p><i>The ELA Common Core in Grade 1 includes, "Speaking and Listening standards: Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood." This aligns to the indicator of Questioning; specifically, "Students generate questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning."</i></p>

DESCRIPTION OF TAP TEACHING STANDARD	ALIGNMENT TO COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
<p>Grouping Students This TAP indicator deals with the instructional arrangement of the students during a given lesson. It focuses on how students are grouped for the instruction and activities of the lesson and how they are held accountable for the work they are expected to complete.</p>	<p><i>The Common Core require students to be actively involved in their learning through collaboration and communication. The Speaking and Listening standards require students to participate effectively in a range of conversations and to collaborate with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. To implement the standards effectively, students must have multiple opportunities to grow and expand their expertise in leading and participating in collaborative conversations. To ensure the success of these grouping structures, teachers must have clear expectations for group members, and members should be held accountable for the work they are expected to complete.</i></p>
<p>Teacher Content Knowledge This TAP indicator addresses teachers' knowledge of the content they are teaching, as well as their ability to implement strategies to support student learning. Also addressed in this indicator is a teacher's ability to connect the content being taught to other ideas and concepts, as well as teaching limited content to reach a sufficient depth of student understanding.</p>	<p><i>Common Core standards are fewer in number than most current state standards and emphasize higher-level thinking levels. They also convey that intellectual growth occurs over time, across years and across disciplines. The TAP Teaching Standards value a teacher's ability to connect content across other disciplines and to teach limited content to ensure the depth and mastery of student learning.</i></p>
<p>Teacher Knowledge of Students This indicator deals with how well teachers know their students and their learning styles and interests. It also addresses how well teachers differentiate their instructional methods and content to ensure that students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.</p>	<p><i>To truly understand our students' learning needs and interests, we need to focus on assessments as well as instruction with the Common Core State Standards. When utilizing assessment results, teachers can correctly determine students' understanding of the standard in focus and then use the results to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.</i></p>
<p>Thinking and Problem-Solving These TAP teaching indicators emphasize the importance of 'teaching' thinking. Research shows four main ways to teach thinking: Questioning, Modeling, Responding and Structuring. The TAP Teaching Standards provide a guide for explicitly teaching thinking. Thinking and Problem-Solving are closely connected, and this link has a profound effect on how teachers teach thinking and what students do as a result of their thinking.</p>	<p><i>For students to master the Common Core grade-level standards, teachers must explicitly 'teach' thinking to all students in all grades. Teaching students to think about their thinking and their learning process helps equip them to meet the rigor of the Common Core expectations. Students who practice metacognitive thinking as a part of their daily school routine in all subjects have fewer problems with learning progressions in the Common Core (Reeves, 2011). The Common Core State Standards expect students to be doing the intellectual work—to sort and categorize, compare and contrast, evaluate, analyze and reason. The demands of the Common Core are very high, not just in the level of text complexity, but also in the nature of student readings.</i></p> <p><i>The Common Core Reading standards for K–5 include, "Craft and Structure: Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations." This aligns to the indicator of Thinking; specifically, the descriptor that states, "The teacher sometimes provides opportunities where students generate a variety of ideas and alternatives and analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints."</i></p>

DESCRIPTION OF TAP TEACHING STANDARD	ALIGNMENT TO COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
DESIGNING AND PLANNING DOMAIN	
<p>Instructional Plans Instructional plans include measurable, explicit goals aligned to standards with activities, materials and assessments also aligned to standards. These plans should also include evidence that they are appropriate for all learners and provide regular opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.</p>	<p><i>The Common Core could create a shift for teachers developing instructional plans, as plans need to incorporate critical thinking and opportunities for student collaboration. Teachers need to plan for a student-centered classroom where students analyze, evaluate, elaborate, defend and reason.</i></p>
<p>Student Work Student work should require students to think critically rather than just reproduce information. Students are challenged to show evidence of their thinking through extended writing.</p>	<p><i>The Common Core requires students to make decisions based on evidence and to demonstrate their thinking through writing. At all levels of the Common Core, students are expected to actively engage in making connections within text and across multiple texts while using analytical thinking skills to synthesize textual evidence. Planning for this type of student work takes time and thought. The Common Core also places a strong emphasis on extended writing, not only in ELA but across all content areas. The emphasis on writing is equal to the emphasis on reading. Through writing, students can show evidence of their thinking and their understanding of a concept.</i></p>
<p>Assessment An effective assessment plan is a fundamental part of instruction and learning. Assessment plans are aligned to the standard in focus and measure performance in multiple ways. Integrating writing into assessments allows teachers to assess student thinking and their understanding of a concept. These results can then inform future instruction.</p>	<p><i>Both the PARCC and SBAC assessment systems use an evidence-based design to build their testing blueprints. Students are assessed using multiple measures (multiple choice, constructed response, extended response) to demonstrate their mastery of the standard.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers can develop their own formative assessments that require students to analyze, evaluate and explain rather than just reproduce information. Educators can deconstruct the Common Core to determine exactly what students need to know and be able to do. Educators can then design assessment questions directly matched to the deconstructed concepts, skills and levels of thinking. Student responses to these assessment questions can then inform future instructional decisions.</i></p>
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DOMAIN	
<p>Expectations Teachers must create a safe learning environment where expectations are high for all students, and allow students to learn from their mistakes to value their successes.</p>	<p><i>Teachers can begin to prepare for the Common Core by comparing their current state standards to the Common Core and determining where higher expectations for learning are needed. One glance at the Common Core's expectations reveals a much stronger emphasis on higher-level thinking skills than in many current state standards. Teachers must be able to create a safe learning environment where expectations are high and where critical thinking and problem-solving are supported.</i></p>
<p>Managing Student Behavior The timely and effective management of student behavior is critical for effective instruction in a classroom. For teachers to manage student behavior effectively, they must not only model the expectation but have knowledge of the students they are teaching. Teachers and students should establish clear rules for learning and behavior.</p>	<p><i>To have the rich conversations expected in the Common Core, rules need to be in place and students must come to the classroom prepared. Starting at an early age, teachers should include students in making rules for classroom discussions. It should be clear that how we speak and how we listen to one other are equally important. Teachers need to model these expectations with guided practice until the rules become the norm for students.</i></p>
<p>Environment All students and guests should feel welcome in a classroom. The environment should encourage and promote individual and group learning where materials are well organized and understandable by all students.</p>	<p><i>The new Speaking and Listening standards create a need for classroom environments that value and promote rich conversations and showcase student knowledge. Students need multiple opportunities to collaborate with others in a variety of settings.</i></p>
<p>Respectful Culture Creating a positive classroom environment begins with showing respect for one another. This begins with the teacher modeling these expectations on a regular basis.</p>	<p><i>The Common Core stresses the importance of critical citizenship. Students are encouraged to question, compare and contrast different views, think about biases and assumptions behind them and come to an evidence-based, well-reasoned stance. To engage in conversations on this level, teachers must create a positive classroom environment where students show respect for one other and welcome the interests and opinions of others.</i></p>



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