Implementing the Common Core

CORE 4 ALL

Written by
Alan Matan
Susan Savage
Melinda Eckhardt
Chris Baldwin

CORE 4 ALL: Implementing the Common Core

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About the Authors

Alan Matan is currently the Department Chairman of Foreign Languages and English as a Second Language for Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Illinois. In addition to his daily work as a school administrator, Alan serves on the steering committee of PENCELLS, a Chicagoland consortium dedicated to the improvement of instruction of English language learners. Alan has presented on a variety of topics including On-Ramps to Content, ELLs in the Science Classroom, and RtI for ELLs. Beyond his work as an educator and edupreneur, Alan is family oriented, married for eighteen years to his lovely wife Tammi, a dance instructor, and dedicated father of two beautiful teenage daughters. Mr. Matan lives in the northwestern suburbs of Chicago.

Susan Savage is a reading specialist, ELL teacher, and instructional coach at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Illinois. She is deeply committed to improving learning at Maine West High School through her work as a teacher and as an instructional coach, co-leading a major curriculum restructuring project. Ms. Savage has presented on issues relating to literacy and ELLs, including Book Bistro: Independent Reading and English Language Learners and Poetry in the Second Language Classroom. Her guiding mission as a lifelong educator is to make a positive impact on as many student lives as possible. When not working on this life mission, Ms. Savage puts her focus on her family life with her husband John (also a teacher) and energetic son and daughter.

Melinda Eckhardt was a reading specialist, English teacher, and staff developer at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Illinois. Together, Melinda and Chris Baldwin created a staff development program which guided colleagues to advance the literacy development of high school students. Ms. Eckhardt's primary goals as an educator were to enable each student to become a lifelong learner and to achieve his or her personal best. Surrounded by a busy and energetic family, Melinda spends her free time with her husband, two sons, daughter, son-in-law, and grand-dogs.

Chris Baldwin is a reading specialist and English teacher at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Illinois. Chris and Melinda Eckhardt partnered for the previous thirteen years creating staff development literacy programs in District 207 following successful collaboration during the NCA reaccreditation process at Maine West from 1995 through 1997. Ms. Baldwin's goal, and career challenge, is to ensure reading success is possible for every high school student so that each literacy challenge, whether it be in college, trade school, or the work force, can easily be met. Ms. Baldwin divides her time between work and home where she can be found having fun reading and learning with two dogs, two cats, and six children.

Introduction

The United States Department of Education, concerned with lackluster student performance, instituted education reforms during the latter part of the twentieth century. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education, under President Ronald Reagan, published *A Nation at Risk*, a report claiming that the American school system was failing to prepare students for the competitive workforce. Included in its recommendations was the need for a seven-hour school day and a 200 to 220-day school year. This commission also recommended that teacher salaries be competitive, as well as performance-based. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was proposed with the stated goal to increase teacher accountability and assure that all students achieve specified learning goals during their schooling. NCLB also required school districts to discover ways in which to close the achievement gap between economically secure students and students from less secure diverse ethnic and economically challenged backgrounds. NCLB evaluated school success by measuring the percent of students meeting or exceeding the learning targets specified by state exams.

It now is 2010. Over the last 30 years we have accumulated sufficient empirical data to create a superior, well-thought-out educational plan for all students in every classroom in the United States. Current educational research suggests the appropriate methodologies in terms of which to train students to become productive, global citizens in the 21st century workplace. Educational leaders such as Tony Wagner, Robert Marzano, John Hattie, and Douglas Reeves have provided educators with research data that has been proven to improve student achievement. However, few teachers have or take the time to read that research or implement its findings into their classrooms.

A number of important lines of research are included in this literature. For instance: Wagner stated there are seven survival skills for the 21st century skills that students must master to compete in the global workforce; Marzano's team conducted research to target which instructional strategies have a positive effect on academic achievement; Hattie synthesized meta-analyses that influence student achievement; Reeves collected evidence of best practices implemented in successful high poverty schools proving demographics are not destiny. And, there are others.

In a profession where teachers tire of the constant parade of new trends and initiatives, educators are required to ask which of these novel ideas matters above all others; What truly impacts student achievement; How can we teachers incorporate the worthwhile findings into engaging units of study that address what we feel are necessary skills and academic standards?

Chapter 1: The Common Core State Standards
The Common Core: 21st Century Approach for Teachers and Students

The Common Core State Standards, initiated by the National Governor's Association for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, were created as a vehicle to help educators prepare students for success in post-secondary opportunities and the 21st century global workplace.

As with any new initiative, there always will be those who are against it, those who have better ideas, and those who do not believe in change. The launching of the Common Core State Standards in June of 2010 has stirred up controversy. Some believe that these standards will lead to a national curriculum and a national assessment. Others believe that the Common Core State Standards will hinder the creativity of the teacher. We believe the Common Core State Standards will create an opportunity for students and teachers to begin anew. This solid set of standards focuses on multiple literacies in English and language arts as well as in the content areas of history, social studies, science, and technical subjects.

What do we want for our children by the end of high school? We want them to be well-rounded, productive citizens prepared for post-secondary opportunities. We want them to be active citizens who can think creatively and influence others. How can teachers use research-based methodologies in coordination with the Common Core State Standards? Teachers can combine and implement the Common Core through rich curriculum, targeted assessments, and research-based instruction. We urge educators to look through the Common Core State Standards as a foundation for rejuvenating curriculum to best meet the educational needs of the children of each classroom across the United States. Only then can we be confident students are ready for the 21st century global workforce.

Benefits of the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards, aligned with college and work expectations, focus on learning expectations and will improve the academic achievement of all students. The benefits of the Common Core State Standards will positively impact both teachers and students alike.

- The Common Core State Standards will provide students with the necessary skills to access higher education and to compete globally in the workforce. The Common Core is a vehicle that will assist educators in creating quality and fair skills-based instruction for all students. The 21st century skills embedded in the Common Core will pave the way for students to think, reflect, analyze, influence, evaluate, and communicate.

- The Common Core State Standards will enhance teacher collaboration. When *teachers across the nation use* the same standards and common language, collaboration becomes more meaningful. Professional development at conferences, professional organizations, and across networks will be more powerful than ever. When teachers share best practice, students benefit.

- The Common Core State Standards will provide more stability for the mobile student. In order to close the achievement gap once and for all, educators need consistency with learning targets for

each grade level. Clear expectations across each county, state, and nation will help create constancy for students who move due to economic and personal reasons.

- Finally, the Common Core State Standards, when combined with the methodologies of Marzano's and Hattie's most effective instructional strategies, and Wagner's seven survival skills, will create young adult leaders for the 21st century global society.

21st Century Teachers

Teachers are the most significant factor in student achievement. Abundant research proves that teachers using best instructional practices and sharing those practices with others is the greatest approach to enhance student learning (Marzano, Pickering, Pollack 2001). The **key to improved student performance is teachers creating, sharing and delivering relevant and engaging curriculum**. Kathryn Au of the International Reading Association states:

> *It's the expertise of the classroom teacher that will allow standards to elevate the achievement of each and every student in the classroom. Let's keep in mind that standards don't teach—teachers teach (Au 2010).*

Experts agree that teachers are the key to incorporating the Common Core State Standards and making them work in classrooms. When classroom teachers use the Common Core State Standards as the curriculum base, create common formative assessments to guide instruction, implement a rich curriculum for students to master, and execute instructional strategies that are proven to be successful, student achievement will soar.

Core 4 All is confident that with the combination of the four pillars, **S**tandards**, A**ssessment**, C**urriculum**,** and **I**nstruction**,** students will become the leaders and innovators of the 21st century. Core 4 All provides a framework for teachers to help create units of study to improve student achievement.

Chapter 2: SACI Overview

The Purpose of *Implementing the Common Core*
> *—For standards-based education to prove effective, teachers must have adequate time and support to consider standards thoughtfully and to work out the practical implications for themselves and their students (Au 2010).*

Implementing the Common Core is a professional guide for classroom teachers as they interpret and apply the Common Core State Standards to their lessons.

We live in a world of acronyms: ATM, NCLB, AYP, JPEG, ACT, lol. Let's add one more to the list: SACI: /**sa**-key/. SACI is a straightforward approach for analyzing **S**tandards, creating **A**ssessments, building relevant **C**urriculum and basing **I**nstruction on high yield strategies. So, back to the burning questions:
- What truly impacts student achievement?

- How can teachers incorporate these findings into engaging units of study based on Common Core State Standards and skills?

Focus on the four pillars of **SACI:**

Standards that focus on clear learning targets

Assessments as indicators to monitor student progress

Curriculum that is viable, relevant and engages students

Instruction that is proven to work and aligns with standards

Let's take a look at an overview of the Core 4 All SACI Unit Design process.

Standards : *specific criteria for what students are expected to know (understandings) and be able to do (skills) (Lexicon of Learning ASCD)*

Successful teacher-created implementation of the Common Core State Standards will ensure that all students are prepared for post-secondary opportunities, whether a four-year university, junior college, technical training, or the workforce. Although the literacy standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening and Language, Common Core insists that literacy development be a **shared responsibility** among all teachers and all content areas. The content areas of English Language Arts, History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects all **share general, cross-disciplinary** College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards; however, specific literacy standards are tailor made for each grade level and content area. Since interdisciplinary literacy development is the focus of the Common Core State Standards, these standards will provide consistency for teachers and students as they communicate their learning experiences with one another whether at the school, district, state, or national level. Common standards provide teachers with opportunities to discuss strategies at conferences, workshops, and in professional learning communities. Common Core **Standards** are the building blocks needed to create **assessments**, design **curriculum**, and implement research based **instructional** strategies.

Assessment : *measuring the learning and performance of students (Lexicon of Learning ASCD)*

 Successful teacher-created assessments based on the Common Core Standards measure skill growth, rather than merely students' content knowledge. Assessments are designed as both formative* and summative* in order to ensure students' proficiency.

Common formative assessments gauge what students are able to do based on the standard(s) being taught. Teacher teams analyze formative assessment results to modify ongoing curriculum and instruction. In addition, a well designed rubric confirms students' skill levels. When constructing a rubric, teachers must work collaboratively to set clear **Proficiency(ies) per Standard (PpS)*** as measured by the assessment

for each standard taught. Lastly, assessments reflect increasing levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. (See appendix A for Bloom's Taxonomy.)

Formative Assessment: short assessments given before and during the teaching process to guide and improve teaching and learning, assessment for learning (Ainsworth 20)
Summative Assessment: end result assessment that provides degree of student mastery relative to standard, assessment of learning (Ainsworth 19)
Proficiency per Standard (PpS): advancement of a skill, mastery of a standard (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); independent student performance that meets criterion established in the standards as measured by an assessment (CCSS Appendix A, 42)

Curriculum: *a written plan outlining what students will be taught, a course of study (Lexicon of Learning ASCD)*
Successful literacy curriculum for the 21st century student must embrace the wide range of standards, skills, and content that students need to know, understand, and be able to do. According to the Key Design Considerations of the Common Core State Standards, teacher chosen curriculum must include authentic documents, classics of literature, and informational or expository text of increasing complexity. The Common Core complexity model for reading materials comprises —Qualitative dimensions of text complexity," "Quantitative dimensions of text complexity" and "Reader and task considerations" (CCSS 54).

In addition to achieving reading proficiency in challenging literature as well as complex informational text in all content areas, students must become proficient writers, able to defend claims, convey meaning and explain their writing process through sound reasoning. Students must be able to research effectively, evaluate sources, and craft well thought-out reports. Oral presentations, participation in informal discussions, and collaborative problem solving are also mandatory literacy skills. Appropriate technology will be infused across all language activities. (CCSS: See Standard 10: Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading 6 – 12 for an in-depth explanation of complexity, range of text types, and illustrated texts for grades 6 – 12).

Instruction
Successful instruction uses best-practice, research-based strategies in content that inspires not bores. Following the Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional model, teachers must model the strategy, guide student practice, and assess student movement towards independence *(Pearson and Gallagher 1993).* Instructional strategies must be well thought out and complement the standard being taught. The Key Design Considerations of the Core do not mandate specific processes or strategies that teachers must implement. Rather, teachers are encouraged to utilize professional knowledge, judgment, and experience to plan instruction that will most effectively enable students to master the Standards (CCSS: Key Design Considerations 4). Please refer to Chapter 6: SACI: Instruction for a specific list of research proven strategies.

Chapter 3: **SACI: Standards**

As more and more states continue to adopt the Common Core State Standards, it is vital that Professional Learning Teams use the Common Core as the cornerstone of their units of study. The implementation of the Common Core State Standards will ensure that all students are ready for post-secondary opportunities. The Common Core State Standards are research and evidence based, aligned with college and work expectations, and are rigorous and internationally benchmarked **(CCSS 3).** These standards were designed to prepare our students to become more literate for the 21st century global society. Using the Common Core as the foundation of curriculum will ensure reflective readers, better writers, compassionate listeners, articulate speakers and critical thinkers; in other words, leaders of tomorrow.

How are The Common Core State Standards organized? Grades 6- 12 are divided into the two strands: English Language Arts **and** Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. However, English Language Arts & History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects all share identical College and Career Ready (CCR) anchor standards in reading and writing. These broad anchor standards articulate cross-disciplinary literacy expectations required by all students for both college and career readiness training. Following the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, content and grade specific literacy standards communicate the reading and writing skills necessary for success in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects. English Language Arts (ELA) includes anchor standards in four areas: Reading, Writing, as well as Speaking and Listening and Language. Specific grade-level standards for ELA follow the anchor standards in the aforementioned four skill domains.

How should a professional learning team begin?

Step One: choose two or three common core state standards

Step Two: complete a t-chart analysis

Step Three: match each action with Bloom's Taxonomy /DOK

Step Four: establish a purpose for learning

Core 4 All believes beginning with the Common Core State Standards as the cornerstone of the unit of study will improve the academic achievement of our students.

Step One: Choose Two or Three Common Core State Standards
Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) must negotiate on the two to three essential standards students must master in a given unit of study. All standards are important, but by focusing on these agreed upon essential standards, teachers and students have a clear focus of the learning targets of the unit. Crystal clear learning targets give teachers a direct focus toward the goal(s) of the unit and students a clear vision of critical skills.

To best understand the SACI process, let's see it in practice.

Choose a standard: Common Core State Standards, Grade 8: Reading Standards for Informational Text

Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (RI.8.9)

Step Two: Complete a T-Chart Analysis (See Appendix B for Template)
Teachers and students must not only be cognizant of the whole standard, but also of its components. It is vital that teachers take the time to break down the components of the standard into two parts: actions and concepts. By creating a T-chart Analysis, teachers can explicitly teach the actions and concepts of the given standard to facilitate student learning. Let's go back to our standard:

Complete a T-Chart Analysis

Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (RI.8.9)

The T-Chart divides the standard into a more manageable form.

Actions* What skills do you want students to demonstrate?	Concepts* What do you want students to be able to understand?
Analyze	Conflicting information
Identify	Topic
	Disagree
	Fact
	Interpretation

*Often the "actions" column will list verbs and "concepts" column will list nouns.

Break down the terms into meaningful chunks so the standard makes more sense for the student. It is important to incorporate these terms, or smaller chunks, into teacher lesson plans in order to ensure the CCSS vocabulary is embedded into the curriculum.

Step Three: Match each Action with Bloom's Taxonomy

To determine the level of the student cognitive process indicated in the standard, match the action with one of the six levels in Bloom's Taxonomy. Knowing the cognitive level(s) of the standard will guide the construction of appropriate assessments. (See Appendix A for Anderson's 2001 revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy.)

Match each action with Bloom's Taxonomy

Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Actions* – What skills do you want students to demonstrate?	Concepts – What do you want students to be able to understand?	Bloom's Taxonomy* DOK
Analyze	Conflicting information	Level 4/analysis/DOK level 3
Identify	Topic	Level 1/Knowledge/DOK level 1
	Disagree	
	Fact	
	Interpretation	

If the exact verb is not stated in Bloom's Taxonomy, look for a synonym.

Step Four: Establish a Purpose for Learning (PfL)

We know what we teach. We have also been trained how to teach our students, but what is the purpose of teaching? Why are the students learning a particular unit? To create an effective unit of study, there must be a purpose or a hook, to entice students into seeing a need to master the standard, not only during the unit, but as a life-long skill beyond the classroom setting. The PfL should be written in student friendly language and can be formed as a question or statement based on the standard being taught.

Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (RI.8.9)

PfL (question): Why analyze two or more conflicting texts?

PfL (statement): In today's world full of information, we must be able to sort through information to make knowledgeable decisions. We need to identify the differences between fact and interpretation.

The Purpose for Learning (PfL) sets the stage for the unit. It is the hook needed to ensure that students recognize the need to learn the skill. This is the Introduction in the Components of an Effective Lesson.

Chapter 4: **SACI: Assessment**

What is the primary purpose of student assessment? To be able to assign grades in the gradebook? To measure student knowledge of trivial facts? To punish students? No! The fundamental purpose of assessment is to improve student learning by measuring the student's proficiency of the targeted standard (Proficiency per Standard). The primary assessments must be linked to the chosen standard(s). The Proficiency per Standard (PpS) is an overlooked component of unit design and teacher professional development; however, without clear agreed upon indicators of what proficiency is for each of the standards, grades will be arbitrary and we will not have measures to determine if our students are meeting the standards. It is not enough to rely on *annual* assessments to measure if a student is meeting expectations. Annual assessments provide trends, but to make an impact on student achievement,

formative assessments must be given more frequently and analyzed collectively in professional learning teams. It is important to look very closely at the **actions** and **concepts** used in the standard to set PpS indicators. These indicators are the essential pieces that will provide teachers with the data needed to determine student progress.

Breaking down and analyzing each standard into its performance indicators will provide the teacher a clear path to the types of assessments needed in order for students to demonstrate proficiency. Certain standards may lend themselves better to a selected response assessment (True/False, Multiple Choice, Matching, Fill-in-the-Blank with Work Bank); whereas, constructed response (short answer, short essay, or extended response) may be more appropriate for other standards.

After the initial proficiency assessment has been analyzed, teacher teams can clearly see which specific aspects of the standard they need to focus on during instruction. For those students who demonstrate proficiency on the pre-assessment, enrichment activities during the unit of study will further their learning capacity. These enrichment activities would directly relate to the next band of standards in the Common Core. Linking assessment to instruction provides a more meaningful unit framework, granting clear direction for both teachers and students.

Let's look back at the example of the standard we used in Chapter 3:

Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (RI.8.9)

Prior to instruction create a rubric based on the chosen standard. This rubric would be used for both pre and formative assessments and must measure student proficiency with the actions and concepts.

Example Rubric:
Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

Challenge 4	Proficient 3	Beginning 2	Not meeting 1
All proficient material PLUS elements of the next levels of the Common Core	Correctly analyzed conflicting information on the same topic from various texts Correctly identified where the texts disagree on matters of fact Correctly identified where the texts disagree on matters of interpretation	Meets 2 out of 3 proficiency indicators	Meets 1 or less proficiency indicators

Assessment Type: Selected Response (Multiple Choice, True/False, Matching Fill-in-the-Blank with Word Bank)

As assessment items are created, it is important to make sure that the items match the appropriate assessment level. Refer back to the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as shown in Chapter 3. Assessment questions should fit Level 1 – Identify and Level 4 – Analyze.
By focusing on the standard, creating a purpose for learning (PfL), and developing a pre and formative assessment rubric to measure the proficiency level of the skill (PpS), teachers are on their way to designing a unit of study that will be far better than any content-driven curriculum.

See Appendix B for Template

Chapter 5: **SACI: Curriculum**

Core 4 All believes the Common Core State Standards are the cornerstone of a 21st century curriculum, a curriculum whereby students achieve proficiency in prioritized standards by utilizing content as a vehicle for skill development. In a standards referenced curriculum, student performance is judged against a standard rather than mastery of content. Core 4 All urges PLT's first to select the prioritized standards and then to determine relevant and engaging content. This method of curriculum development is a paradigm shift from teachers focusing on content and subsequently plugging in the standards.

Traditionally, content was the driving force of any unit of study. For example, students studied *Romeo and Juliet* (English), the Civil War (History), or cell division (Science). Instruction was focused on the content the students were expected to learn. The assessments generally measured content knowledge. Look at an older exam, one that you gave on a regular basis. Analyze the items on that test.

- How many of the items measure content?

- How many are content questions and where do they range in Bloom's Taxonomy/DOK?

- How many are recall and understanding questions?

- How many of the test items delve into application, analysis, or synthesis?

And, most important of all,
- How many of the test items measure a skill or standard that was specifically taught?

On the other hand, in a Common Core State Standards referenced curriculum, PLTs initially establish non-negotiable learning standards. The PLT then selects the content that will best serve as the vehicle for standard proficiency. According to the CCSS Introduction, although the standards refer to "forms of content including mythology, foundational U.S. documents, and Shakespeare, they do not – indeed, cannot – enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn. The standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum" (CCSS 6). PLT's create this "content-rich curriculum" based on the following variables (CCSS 8):

- Text complexity and quality

- Mixture of literary and informational texts, with a definite emphasis on informational text

- Writing-reading connections

- Writing types including argument, informative/explanatory texts, and narrative

- Communication and collaboration through oral expression and careful listening

- Appropriate use of language and vocabulary

For assistance in selecting appropriate content and performance tasks, refer to the Common Core resources:

- Short sampling of literary and informational texts: *Texts illustrating the complexity, quality, and range of student reading 6-12 (*CCSS Reading Standard 10, 58)

- Appendix A for a thorough explanation of text complexity, the three text types of writing, and an overview of language standards, and vocabulary acquisition Common Core State Standards Appendix A

- Appendix B for an extensive collection of grade level text exemplars and performance tasks (stories, drama, poetry, and informational texts) for ELA, History/Social Sciences, Science, and Technical Subjects Common Core State Standards Appendix B

- Appendix C for grade level samples of student argument, informative and explanatory writing Common Core State Standards Appendix C

Let's return to our standard:

Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation (RI8.9).

During the 8th grade year the PLT knows they must cover the emergence of cities across the United States. The team selects content to best match our standard.

1st select content from Appendix B of the CCSS.
Murphy, Jim. *The Great Fire*. New York: Scholastic, 1995. (1995)

Media Text: The Great Chicago Fire, an exhibit created by the Chicago Historical Society that includes essays and images:
http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/gcf-index.html (CCSS Appendix B, page 94)

2nd select engaging and relevant content from current newspapers, magazines, short stories, online resources, or current classroom texts.

- teacher selects engaging and relevant content from on-line resources and teacher/library collection about Mrs. O'Leary's cow

- teacher also selects multi-modal material such as music, art, and film as another way to address different learning styles

Chapter 6: SACI: Instruction

When it comes to classroom instruction, there is a tendency for teachers to overdo instructional strategies by including in their daily lessons a concoction of various strategies in the hopes of improving student comprehension or simply alleviating boredom. It is true that, as educators, we have obtained many different instructional tools along the way. But, have we really stopped to analyze which instructional strategies actually produce the desired results? In the SACI process, instruction is just as vital as the standards being addressed, the assessments being developed, and the content curriculum being implemented. We can ensure that students meet learning goals by using specific, proven, research-based instructional strategies that match with the skill we want to teach, the assessment we develop, and the content we ask our students to learn. We must collaboratively determine the two or three best research-based strategies that would support the learning of our particular standard. Not all strategies work with all standards. If the application of instructional strategies is not your area of expertise, then seek assistance through school-based specialists, like reading specialists or instructional coaches. As skills are taught, it is important to focus on two or three instructional strategies per skill. This specific focus allows teachers to gather —causal data to gauge the success of the particular strategies. How would we know which strategies contribute to student learning if ten or more are used to teach a skill? This "casual data" can then be used along with student data as teachers reflect on their teaching and share successes in their professional learning teams.

The primary view or "script" of an American teacher is one of a passionate, autonomous, intellect creatively transmitting knowledge through the development of his craft. Although this view has value, ample research proves that instruction is not only an art but more importantly a science based on quantitative and qualitative data that delineates what improves student achievement. In addition, the creation of collaborative learning teams where teachers plan, assess, reflect and move away from the isolation script is the way to improved performance for all students. When teachers focus on a skill they want students to master, develop the assessment that matches the complexity of the skill, and use precise instructional strategies to teach the skill, they will provide their students with the greatest opportunities to succeed in and out of the classroom. John Hattie's 2009 synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement shows that along with teacher-student relationships and teacher quality, teaching strategies are proven to be among the top indicators of student achievement (Hattie 2009). Robert Marzano's research on instructional strategies that work continue to be confirmed best practice (Marzano, Pickering, Pollack 2001). Based on the combination of Hattie and Marzano's research, we have crafted the following list of best practice instructional strategies that can be embedded in curricular units of study.

- Clear goals for learning

- Formative assessment for learning and feedback

- Concept mapping and non-linguistic/graphical representation

- Summarizing and Note Taking

- Cues, questions, and advance organizers

- Early interventions for struggling learners

- Reciprocal teaching

- Modeling exemplars

Let's head back to our chosen skill:

Standard: Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (RI.8.9)

Instructional strategies that could be implemented to help students master the standard include:

1) Set clear goals for learning. Each student must understand the goals of the lesson.

2) Utilize a graphic organizer such as a Discussion Web to help students analyze and identify the facts and opinions of the selected texts. (Refer to sources linked below and see example of a Discussion Web on the following page.)
NCTE Read Write Think - Discussion Web
USA Today Discussion Web Strategy: Comprehend, Evaluate

3) Encourage students to summarize and take notes as they read the articles. The Discussion Web could serve as an organizational tool for note taking as well as for an ensuing class discussion.

Why does the institution of education slowly integrate proven instructional strategies into the classroom? By focusing on research-based instructional strategies that best match the content and standards being learned, a greater opportunity exists for students to produce positive results and to improve their academic proficiency.

Final Note

Let's be honest. As teachers, we love to gather activities and strategies that are easy to implement in the classroom. —Oh, this is fun! "My students will love this!" "I'm going to use this right away!" This mindset does not allow the Common Core State Standards to anchor the curriculum. Activities should *not* drive curriculum, standards should. Student achievement will improve when we reform our way of thinking, our way of planning, our way of assessing. This work will be difficult for both teachers and students. At first the SACI process will be challenging, but through practice and collaboration with colleagues, units will have a skills-based purpose. By starting with the Common Core State Standards, creating common formative assessments, and adding the necessary content curriculum and effective instructional strategies, we will be our way to providing our students with the academic tools needed to be part of the 21st century global society.

As teachers, we live our lives going to school. We put in countless hours of work trying to mold the minds of our students that are seated in front of us each day. Reflect on how you have taught these last five, ten, twenty years. Now take what you have learned in this book and think about the possibilities for change in your classroom and school by implementing the Common Core State Standards with the Core 4 All SACI process. 32

Appendix A : Bloom's Taxonomy

1. To remember	Choose, define, describe, find, identify, label, list, locate, match, name, recall, recite, recognize, record, relate, retrieve, say, select, show, sort, tell
2. To understand	Categorize, clarify, classify, compare, conclude, construct, contrast, demonstrate, distinguish, explain, illustrate, interpret, match, paraphrase, predict, represent, reorganize, summarize, translate, understand
3. To apply	Apply, carry out, construct, develop, display, execute, illustrate, implement, model, solve, use
4. To analyze	Analyze, ascertain, attribute, connect, deconstruct, determine, differentiate, discriminate, dissect, distinguish, divide, examine, experiment, focus, inter, inspect, integrate, investigate, organize, outline, reduce, solve, test for
5. To evaluate	Appraise, assess, award, check, conclude, convince, coordinate, critique, defend, detect, discriminate, evaluate, judge, justify, monitor, prioritize, rank, recommend, support, test, value
6. To create	Adapt, build, compose, construct, create, design, develop, elaborate, extend, formulate, generate, hypothesize, invent, make, modify, plan, produce, originate, refine, transform

Depth of Knowledge—how it relates to Bloom

Depth of Knowledge	Bloom's Taxonomy
Level 1: Recall of fact	Knowledge and comprehension; some application if simple and direct
Level 2: Skills and concepts	More complex application and analysis
Level 3: Strategic reasoning	Complex analysis and evaluation
Level 4: Extended thinking	Synthesis

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T-Chart Analysis---Step 2 & 3

Action---What skills do you want students to demonstrate?	Concepts---What do you want students to be able to understand?	Bloom's Taxonomy and DOK, page 19
Verb	Noun	

Assessment-page 12

Challenge	Proficient	Beginning	Not Meeting
(Exceeds)	(Meets)	(Approaches)	(emergent/developing)
4	3	2	1

Name_____Period_____   **Texts**

DISCUSSION WEB

Core 4 All SACI Unit Design Template

Proficiency per Standard(PpS)

Standard:			
CHALLENGE 4	**PROFICIENT 3**	**BEGINNING 2**	**NOT MEETING 1**
All proficient material PLUS elements of the next levels of the Common Core	Correctly completed the actions and concepts of the standard	Meets ___ out of ___ proficient criteria	Meets 1 or less proficient criteria

Curriculum

Content for Learning (CfL): What content am I using to ensure the curriculum is <u>relevant and engaging</u> to all my students?

      1. _____

      2. _____

Content vehicle checklist (✓):

    a. Appropriate instructional reading level _____

    b. Multi-modal: ___fiction, ___non-fiction, ____ poetry, ____music, ___videos, ___visuals, ___audio

Instructional Strategies: **Activities Related to Achievement**

Checklist:

_____Reciprocal Teaching   _____Vocabulary instruction

_____Summarizing and Note-Taking   _____Challenge students to problem solve

_____Similarities/Differences: Compare/Contrast   _____ Early interventions for struggling students

_____Focus on building positive teacher-student relationships

_____Clearly defined objectives for learning/Communicate lesson intentions

_____ Formative assessments for learning and feedback

_____ Concept mapping and non-linguistic/graphical representations

_____ Cues, Questions, Advance Organizers, Concept Mapping

_____ Providing completed examples, exemplars, models

_____ In-class practice (guided, pair, group, independent)

Appendix B

Core 4 All SACI Unit Design Template

<div align="center">

SACI Design Template

</div>

Standard :_____

T-Chart Analysis

Actions – What skills do you want students to demonstrate?	Concepts – What do you want students to be able to understand?

Match skills with Bloom's Taxonomy

Actions – What skills do you want students to demonstrate?	Concepts – What do you want students to be able to understand?	Bloom's Taxonomy

Purpose for Learning(PfL): Focus question and statement that set a purpose for student learning based on standard being taught.

1. _____

2. _____

Assessment:

Use a variety of assessments/multiple measures to create an assessment to measure proficiency.

Selected-Response	Constructed Response	Performance Assessment
Matching	Short Answer	Audio Recording
True/False	Short Essay or Extended Response	Video Recording
Multiple Choice		Oral Presentation
Fill-in-the-Blank With Word Bank		