



# Capture the Core

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## Fourth Grade

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### Research Questions Common-Core Claims by Publishers

By [Benjamin Herold](#) and [Michele Molnar](#)

Statements from publishers that traditional instructional materials are aligned with the Common Core State Standards are largely a "sham," according to a prominent researcher who conducted one of two forthcoming reviews of classroom textbooks.

The jury is still out, though, on the new wave of digital curricula hitting the market.

The findings highlight a new threat to the successful implementation of the common core, as well as a major challenge for districts in the 46 states and the District of Columbia that have adopted versions of the standards.

[William Schmidt, a professor of statistics and education at Michigan State University, said many claims by textbook publishers that their materials are aligned with the Common Core State Standards are a "sham."](#)

—Brian Widdis for Education Week

The studies "reaffirmed what we had been hearing from our state [textbook] working group," especially in mathematics, said Carrie Heath Phillips, a program director for the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#), in Washington, which has helped spearhead the new standards. Ms. Phillips downplayed the impact that misaligned textbooks will have on states' efforts to implement the new standards, but said the new studies "may be an eye-opener" for districts.

"It's buyer beware," she said.

### Snake Oil Salesmen

Hoping to boost their share of a \$9 billion annual market, many publishers now boast that their textbooks are "common-core aligned" and so can help spur the dramatic shifts in classroom instruction intended by the new standards for English/language arts and math.

But in a Feb. 21 presentation of his research at a seminar in Los Angeles hosted by the



[Education Writers Association](#), William Schmidt, a professor of statistics and education at Michigan State University in East Lansing, dismissed most purveyors of such claims as "snake oil salesmen" who have done little more than slap shiny new stickers on the same books they've been selling for years.

Mr. Schmidt, who also co-directs the university's Education Policy Center, and his team recently analyzed about 700 textbooks from 35 textbook series for grades K-8 that are now being used by 60 percent of public school children in the United States. Of those that purported to be aligned with the new standards, he said, some were "page by page, paragraph by paragraph" virtually identical to their old, pre-common-core versions. both print and digital instructional materials to consider.

This is an excerpt from: *Herold, B., & Molnar, M. (2014). Research questions common-core claims by publishers. EdWeek, 33(23), 1, 12-13.*

# Illinois Teachers Have a New Resource



A brand new website has just been released this month just for Illinois classroom teachers. It coincides with level 3 of the Professional Learning Series on the Illinois State Board of Education website and can be accessed at [www.ilclassroomsinaction.org](http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org) and will soon be linked to level 3 of the PLS at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net).

Teachers can find resources and tools that assist with planning and aligning to the ELA and Math CCSS. Links to the best videos and webinars that define what explicit teaching and practice in a CCSS classroom can also be found.

Standards based reporting assistance and Implementation Guides can be found here that assist districts with the final steps of guiding their stakeholders through the process.

The site is not an exhaustive list of websites but direct links to the places that house the exact tools, resources, and videos to assist educators.

This tool is still in the construction phase as new ideas and resources are continually added. Send comments and suggestions to [plscomments@gmail.com](mailto:plscomments@gmail.com)



## 3-12 EQuIP Rubric

If you have been working with units or multi-day lesson plans but wondering if they are actually aligned to the CCSS, Achieve has updated a rubric that will help classroom teachers understand if their efforts are aligned. The rubric is very telling with regards to the exact point or area of the unit or multi-day lesson that may need support.

Ideas and supporting tools such as a PowerPoint and User Guide with many helpful links itemized specifically for each dimension are outlined in these tools.

A lesson template is available in different versions to allow teachers to create plans and also has a descriptive piece that defines the template. Check for updates regularly.

Click [here](#) to view the EQuIP rubric.

**"It is not what is poured into a student that counts but what is planted."**

Linda Conway

## Social Studies and Science Literacy

The critical skills that are used in comprehension are linked to content areas as well. Predicting, synthesizing, sequencing and inferring are all used in social studies and science informational texts. Teachers need to form instruction to intertwine these skills to meet the CCSS.

The links found at [www.ilclassroomsinaction.org](http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org) that assist with teaching social studies are exemplary.

Teachers can find primary source documents and lesson plans linked at the Library of Congress [website](#) along with grade level appropriate news articles on [NewsELA](#).



To assist the science practitioner, there is the Science News for Kids [website](#) that hosts a multitude of articles past and present for use in the classroom. There is also the [strategy link](#) ideas page from Trent University's Dr. Paul Elliott.

Visit the site and check for new updates regularly!

# Free Common Core Aligned Sample Lessons and Assessments

Guest Columnist:  
Mike Briscoe and Team



Implementing the changes that accompany the Common Core can seem like a challenging task at times. What does an aligned lesson look like? How does that differ from what teachers have already been doing in the classroom? How can I tell whether students are making progress toward meeting the standards for their grade? Student Achievement Partners, a nonprofit created by three of the lead writers of the Common Core, has created a website designed to answer just these sort of questions.

Achievethecore.org is full of thousands of free sample lessons, annotated tasks, sample ELA assessments and annotated math assessments. You can use these tools in your classroom tomorrow. They are organized by grade level and subject matter and contain background information so that teachers understand the purpose behind each task. Teachers can feel confident that all the materials are aligned to the Common Core.

To stay up to date on the latest materials available on [achievethecore.org](http://achievethecore.org), follow them on [Twitter](#).

“In mathematics the art of proposing a question must be held of higher value than solving it”

Georg Cantor  
Inventor of Set Theory

## Classroom Tools

Click the icons below to connect to free classroom tools at [Achievethecore.org](http://Achievethecore.org).



Sample Lesson Plans  
<http://bit.ly/1dzpPi1>



Annotated Tasks  
<http://bit.ly/1gYel14>



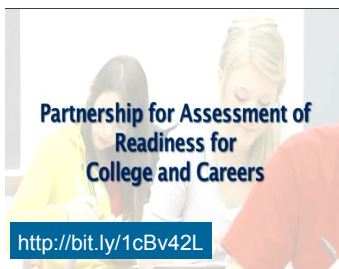
Sample ELA Assessments  
<http://bit.ly/1e9U2B5>



Annotated Math Assessments  
<http://bit.ly/1e9UsHT>



## PARCC Video and Platform



We have developed a new video that will help you as you engage faculty, students, parents and the community in discussions of the new assessments. The video

takes a look at the PARCC assessments and new Illinois Learning Standards. “Improving Student Assessments” explains the keys to PARCC success, which include employing innovation and measuring students’ higher-level thinking abilities. Please feel free to use it in Board meetings, community forums and faculty meetings and also to share through social media and newsletters.



Teachers and students can also begin working with the PARCC platform. Try the tutorial first, then work through a grade-band assessment. How comfortable are your students with the technology platform and tools?

<http://practice.parcc.testnav.com/#>

“Neglect of Mathematics works injury to all knowledge.”

Roger Bacon  
English Philosopher  
1214-1294




# Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

## The New Illinois Learning Standards and Special Education

Special education professionals have been supporting effective instruction by incorporating the new Illinois Learning Standards into students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). One challenge that many teachers are meeting by utilizing an on-line Progressions Tool, ([ELA Tool](#) , [Math Tool](#)) is developing standards-based IEP goals for students. The Progressions Tool offers explicit connections from one set of skills to another, something often missing in educational plans that do not connect to cohesive academic goals accessed through the general education curriculum.

By acquiring a deep knowledge of the general education goals for each grade level, special education teachers are able to identify the 'road map' they need to follow to move students closer to their grade-level academic outcomes. This acceleration vs. remediation paradigm shift supports the standards-based IEP process begun in the 1997 reauthorization of the Individual with Disabilities Act and reinforced with the 2002 and 2004 reauthorizations. Access to the general curriculum is a mandated goal for students with disabilities. By identifying the critical elements for the students' grade level expectations, educators are able to plan for how to get the student to a point where they can understand those grade-level concepts.

Challenges occur when instructing a student where there is a difference between the student's current grade level (e.g., 8th grade) and their instructional level (e.g., 2nd grade reading level). Universal Design, Response to Intervention and building core principles conversations can occur within a learning collaborative environment to support educators during this instructional shift. ISBE has also released a Special [Education Guidance Document](#) to help with this transition. In addition, workshop opportunities can be found at [http://www.isbe.net/common\\_core/htmls/workshops.htm](http://www.isbe.net/common_core/htmls/workshops.htm) 

When writing an IEP goal, teams need to include all three components of high quality goals:

- The conditions under which the behavior will occur
- The desired behavior in measurable, objective, observable terms
- The criterion for mastery and (optional) expected date of achievement if there are no required objectives.

Example:  
John will use decoding strategies such as chunking (*conditions*) to sound out multisyllabic vocabulary words correctly (*desired behavior*) in eight out of ten trials for three consecutive weeks by June 2014. (*criterion for mastery*)

An **ACCOMMODATION** is a change in **HOW** the student accesses and demonstrates learning, but does not change what the student is expected to learn or demonstrate.



A **MODIFICATION** changes **WHAT** a student is expected to learn and demonstrate by changing the level, priority or content.

### PARCC Accommodations

### Making Connections

#### ALL Students

#### Students with disabilities and English Language Learners

Danielson : [Domain 1a, 1e](#)  
**Conditions for Learning Indicators (Rising Star):**  
[CL8](#), [CL10](#)

What if a student doesn't have an IEP and needs some accommodations? PARCC has many accommodations for the test environment that a child can choose. (Items with an \* need to be implemented prior to entering the test environment by the administrator.)

PARCC has created many accommodations within the online assessment tool to assist Special Education students and English Language Learners. Please review the PARCC Guide (link below) for complete details. These accommodations should be defined within the student's IEP prior to testing.

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer Masking*</li> <li>• Audio Amplification</li> <li>• Background/Font color*</li> <li>• Eliminate Answer Choices</li> <li>• Flag Items for review</li> <li>• General Masking*</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Administration</li> <li>• Directions Read Aloud and Repeated</li> <li>• Highlight Tool</li> <li>• Pop-up Glossary</li> <li>• Spell Checker</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Assistive Technology</li> <li>• Braille Editions</li> <li>• Closed-captioning of multimedia passages on ELA/Literacy Assessments</li> <li>• Descriptive Video</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper-and-Pencil edition</li> <li>• Scribing or speech-to-text</li> <li>• Word prediction on ELA/Literacy</li> <li>• Extended Time</li> <li>• Text-to-speech</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|--|

"We must meet our students exactly where they are with exactly the brains they have right now. We must use all the tools we have available to use and not expect them to fit into a mold or all behave exactly the same."  
– Dr. Gene R. Carter, ASCD CEO

Related [Conditions for Learning Indicators](#) are included in the [Rising Star on IIRC](#) school improvement tool and accessible at the [ISBE Learning Supports](#) web site.

Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness – Second Edition (2013), PARCC Accessibility Features and Accommodations Manual 2013 – 2014. Achieve, Inc. Washington, DC: PARCC Assessment Consortia

Visit [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) to download this newsletter.

