

From: Colle, Hope
Sent time: Friday, February 24, 2012 11:10:10 AM
To: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>
Subject: RE: Good article on where to find resources for Common Core - references a few states that have provided resources, and the CCSSO resource List (at the bottom of the article and attached)

Thanks again!

Kindly,
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From: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) [mailto:Cari@excelined.org]
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 11:08 AM
To: Lee, Laurie; Smith, Kevin; Colle, Hope
Subject: FW: Good article on where to find resources for Common Core - references a few states that have provided resources, and the CCSSO resource List (at the bottom of the article and attached)

Here's the article that this was doc was referenced in; it also has a listing of states that are on top of providing resources, so you may want to check it out.

From: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org)
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 10:11 AM
To: Webster, Melinda, PED (Melinda.Webster@state.nm.us)
Subject: Good article on where to find resources for Common Core - references a few states that have provided resources, and the CCSSO resource List (at the bottom of the article and attached)

Educators in Search of Common-Core Resources

By [Catherine Gewertz](#)

Premium article access courtesy of [Edweek.org](#).

As states and districts begin the work of turning common academic standards into curriculum and instruction, educators searching for teaching resources are often finding that process frustrating and fruitless.

Teachers and curriculum developers who are trying to craft road maps that reflect the Common Core State Standards can find themselves in a dispiriting bind: Their current materials fall short, and there is a dearth of good new ones to fill the void.

"Teachers are struggling, and very few people are helping. Almost nothing is available for them to use," said Aaron Grossman, a former 5th and 6th grade teacher in Nevada's Washoe County district who now works at the district office writing curriculum.

Many school leaders are finding a rough road as well.

Greg Netzer, the principal of Van Horn High School in Independence, Mo., said he hasn't heard much from his district about new curriculum. Teachers at his school have banded together to search for material to inform course development and meet weekly to discuss and share what they've found.

"There seems to be very little out there, or it's just not in places we can find it," Mr. Netzer said. "To say we are prepared for common core would be a misconception."

Such frustrations are widespread. A report last fall by the Washington-based Center on Education Policy found school districts divided about how much curriculum change was truly required and reluctant to move forward with common-standards implementation, in part because of inadequate guidance from their states. In an [Education Week webinar](#) on the common standards last summer, the question most frequently asked by the 1,600 participants was where to find instructional resources for the new standards, which cover K-12 English/language arts and mathematics and have been adopted by all but four states.

Ironically, educators' frustrations are unfolding during an unprecedented buzz of activity to build knowledge about the standards and prepare resources for them. States and districts are bringing educators together to discuss the fundamental shifts demanded by the standards, which were unveiled in 2010. Advocacy groups and architects of the standards are holding workshops and posting documents and videos on the Web to illustrate new ways of thinking about and teaching what many now call simply "the core."

But those messages have yet to reach everyone, and the resources and discussions taking shape online can be tough to locate.

Not everyone supports the new standards, however. And some educators who don't are quite content with the complications of the current landscape.

"People at my school are looking for new stuff, but I just sit in those meetings and nod. I'm not getting involved," said a Colorado English/language arts teacher who asked that her name be withheld to avoid sparking the ire of her school's leaders. "As far as I'm concerned, it's better if we just keep doing what we know works, instead of jumping at every new thing just because someone decides it should work."

Assembling Resources

The states that have adopted the standards—and districts in those states—have been responding to the need for knowledge and resources in a variety of ways. [Ohio's model curriculum](#) for the standards is drawing attention. Sample instructional units and other

resources on New York state's engageny.org website have been widely used. Officials from the largest school districts have been meeting, through the Council of the Great City Schools, to help one another craft curricula.

Educators from across state lines are flocking to [resources that Kansas created](#) to help teachers evaluate the complexity of texts.

Through "summer academies" that convened teachers from across the state, the Kansas education department began to build a storehouse of model lesson plans and other resources forged by its own teachers.

"We wanted to carve out a space for teachers to say what they've created or found useful," said Matt Copeland, an English/language arts and literacy consultant to the state education department. "It's wonderful. But it can be a double-edged sword, because teachers can be overwhelmed with information."

Sharing news of its resources with a national organization of state English/language arts coordinators generated a "buzz" about the site, Mr. Copeland said, and Kansas watched other states pick up and build on its work. "We saw what a great opportunity for state collaboration it was," he said.

Louisiana, one of the states that made use of Kansas' text-complexity work, teamed up with Kansas last month for [a webinar on that topic](#) hosted by the Council of Chief State School Officers, which helped spearhead the common-core initiative with the National Governors Association. Within three weeks, it had been viewed by 2,200 people, according to the CCSSO.

Subject-matter groups have been creating resources for teachers. The [National Council of Teachers of English](#), which has taken a neutral stance on the new standards, has issued a [series of four books](#) that guide teachers in lesson planning for the standards and highlight stories of how teachers thought through their own approaches. The organization has also hosted webinars and offers expert members as consultants to schools.

The NCTE has also joined with the [International Reading Association](#), the two national teachers' unions, and other groups to form a coalition that will provide policymakers and practitioners with the "informed, independent, and, when possible, collaborative perspectives" of teachers on the transition to the new standards, said Barbara Cambridge, the director of the NCTE's Washington office.

The major mathematics education groups formed the [Math Common Core Coalition](#), which is building resources into its website, including guidance on choosing or writing math curricula and a series of explanatory videos featuring lead writers of the math standards.

The coalition's website also includes widely used links to two other projects by architects of the math standards: the [Illustrative Mathematics Project](#), which offers examples of tasks for each standard in each domain and grade level, and [draft math "progressions,"](#) which describe how knowledge builds through the grades in each topic.

A Valuable Gap

Even as such resources can help educators shape curriculum, they can't address the need some feel to have lesson plans available immediately, said Mike Shaughnessy, the president of the Reston, Va.-based National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, one of the Math Common Core Coalition members.

"Teachers want something right away, but I say, 'Look, this is going to take some time. We have to stay the course.' Lots of folks are working on this, and there will be some good things," he said. "But it will take some time."

The schism between demand and supply, however frustrating, is productive, said Michael D. Casserly, the executive director of the [Council of the Great City Schools](#), a Washington group that represents the nation's largest school districts.

"This period has value, even though it appears chaotic, because it forces people to get into the guts of the standards and what they mean," he said. "The weight of the lift involved here is so substantial that it's not realistic to think there are going to be extensive materials out there just yet."

Some of the most abundant and easiest-to-find resources for the common standards come from the major educational publishers.

[McGraw-Hill School Education](#), for instance, has produced supplements that teachers can use with their existing reading programs to meet the common standards, said Dan Caton, the division's president. It is also writing new reading programs based on the standards, he said.

On the math side, McGraw-Hill has revised [such programs](#) as Everyday Math and also published new ones based on the standards, such as the elementary-level My Math, Mr. Caton said. In addition, the company has created explanatory materials that are intended to "unpack and demystify" the standards for teachers.

Education companies have been dogged by skepticism about how truly their materials embody the common standards, however. Many issued statements within a month or two of the standards' final release, claiming their materials were "aligned" to or "compliant" with the common core.

One teacher told *Education Week* that the publisher of his district's basal-reader program sent information to the district explaining how each lesson in the program reflected the standards. But when he and a colleague studied and compared them, the two concluded that "what we had on our hands was something entirely different, that it wasn't just a matter of rejiggering things."

The teacher asked that he and the publisher not be named to avoid damaging his district's relations with the publisher.

Mr. Caton said McGraw-Hill has been careful to make distinctions between materials that were created to bridge gaps between existing resources and the common core and those that were "built from the ground up" to reflect the standards.

Lead Writers Expand Role

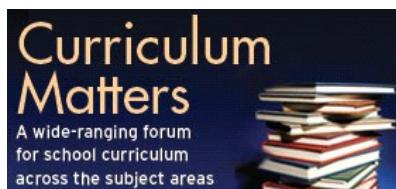
The chief writers of the common standards are playing an expanding role, meanwhile, in building the storehouse of help for the standards. One, William McCallum, a University of Arizona math professor, is leading the Illustrative Mathematics Project and sharing its progress [through his blog](#). Another math writer, Jasonimba, is co-leading work on the draft progressions.

Mr. Zimba and two of the lead English/language arts standards writers, David Coleman and Susan Pimentel, launched a new website last month, achievethecore.org, through the New York City-based nonprofit they founded, Student Achievement Partners, that will serve as a repository of sparingly chosen free resources. ("[GE Foundation Gives Grant For Common-Core Work](#)," Feb. 8, 2012.)

Among the website's starting stock of tools are guides to "close reading" and creating text-dependent questions—both key emphases in the new standards—and a delineation of the core areas of math focus in each grade. Mr. Coleman said Student Achievement Partners will work with teachers across the country to develop and post additional resources.

The **Council of Chief State School Officers**, too, has drafted a **[list of resources for states](#)** that it considers useful in the transition to the common standards.

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It includes explanatory materials about the standards, such as guides for parents, implementation workbooks for state policymakers, and resources that bear directly on teaching, such as instructional tools being created by math and literacy "design collaboratives" and tried in eight states, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (The Gates Foundation also helps underwrite coverage of business and innovation in *Education Week*.)

"We're trying to share high-quality resources as widely as possible," said Chris Minnich, the interim director of the CCSSO's standards, assessment, and accountability initiative. The organization won't be crafting instructional materials, said Margaret Millar, who co-leads the group's common-standards work, preferring instead to focus on being a convenor of state officials, teachers, principals' groups, and professional-development groups for those purposes.

The two groups of states that are designing tests for the new standards are also working on instructional resources, but few are complete. The **Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers**, or PARCC, has produced **content frameworks** that could guide teachers and curriculum developers. It plans an online resource center that will hold an array of tools, such as model instructional units and released assessment tasks.

The other state test-design group, the **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium**, is working on its own version of a digital library, including written and videotaped instructional exemplars and training to help teachers understand and use formative-assessment techniques.

Later this year, the Council of the Great City Schools plans to release guides to help teachers "scaffold" the standards for English-learners and use response-to-intervention techniques in teaching the standards, Mr. Casserly said.

Much of the push to produce common-core resources is—and should be—about changing teaching, said Barbara A. Kapinus, a senior policy analyst at the National Education Association.

"Many conversations about 'creating resources' are really about professional development," she said. "What we need is not a bunch of lesson plans online. It's not a simple matter of step A, step B, then step C.

"Teachers really have to monitor kids' progress and understand the development of their thinking," Ms. Kapinus said. "It's a complex array of skills, not just 'finding the main idea.' Many teachers have not been teaching kids to do the things that these standards require, so they don't know how. What we need is really responsive teaching, and support for that."

Coverage of "deeper learning" that will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world is supported in part by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, at www.hewlett.org.

Sincerely,
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