Module 4
Participant Guide

Focus on Unit Design

Connecticut Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

Grades K–5

Systems of Professional Learning

Connecticut Core Standards Systems of Professional Learning

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Participants will have continued support for the implementation of the new standards through virtual networking opportunities and online resources to support the training of educators throughout the state of Connecticut.

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Today's Agenda

Morning Session

- Opening Activities and Pre-Assessment
- Sharing Successes and Challenges
- Overview of Unit and Lesson Design
- Stage 1: Learning Goals and Essential Questions

Afternoon Session

- Stage 2: Performance Tasks and Rubrics
- Stage 3: Designing Learning
- Reflection and Planning

Post-Assessment, Session Evaluation, and Wrap Up

Introductory Activity

Introductory Activity

Pre-Assessment–CCS-ELA & Literacy

Instructions: Check the box on the scale that best represents your knowledge or feelings about the CCS-ELA & Literacy in your classroom**.**

Self-Assessment Questions	No	Somewhat	Yes	Absolutely, and I could teach it to someone else
	1	2	3	4
I have a deep understanding of unit design with alignment to the CCS-ELA & Literacy and the instructional shifts.				
I know how to develop learning goals, key understandings, and essential questions that are aligned to the CT Core Standards.				
I understand how to use the Cognitive Rigor Matrix when designing units, lessons, and assessments.				
I know how to develop performance tasks and rubrics that are aligned to my learning goals.				
I understand how learning plans and formative assessment provide a framework for lesson design.				
I am able to facilitate collaborative conversations and professional learning for my colleagues related to the key components of this module on unit and lesson design aligned to the CT Core Standards.				

Part 1: Sharing Successes and Challenges

Part 1: Sharing Successes and Challenges

Activity 1: Sharing Modules 1, 2, and 3

DESCRIPTION

Participants will rate their progress on introducing and sharing strategies and best practices from Modules 1, 2, and 3.

DIRECTIONS

1. Review the key understandings list below from the previous three modules.
2. Using a sticky note, determine the level of implementation at your school or district according to the Progress Rating Scale located on slide 11 in the PowerPoint. Place your sticky note on your school's Progress Rating.
3. Form groups of three or four participants, including one member from each rating level.
4. Introduce yourself. Discuss with others in your group which key understandings have been shared within your school/district. Be sure to include both successes and challenges.

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS: CCS-ELA & LITERACY TOPICS FROM MODULES 1, 2, AND 3

- Vertical progressions of the CCS-ELA & Literacy Standards and instructional shifts
- Close reading, academic language, and text-based discussion
- Designing text-dependent questions
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Writing standards: Research base and vertical progression of writing
- Best practices in teaching writing
- Writing with evidence
- Supporting students
- Plan support for educators transitioning to the CT Core State Standards

Discussion Prompts: (Reminder, Notepad is available on page 33 to capture your thoughts.) 

What ideas have you gained from your discussion regarding successes and challenges? What can you bring back to your school to share or implement?

Part 2: Overview of Unit and Lesson Design

Part 2: Overview of Unit and Lesson Design

Activity 2: Tracing the Claim

DESCRIPTION

Participants examine the Five Big Ideas of CCS unit design explained in the article, *From Common Core Standards to Curriculum: Five Big Ideas* located in the Appendix starting on page 35 and trace the claim(s) the authors are making through each of the *Big Ideas*. Participants will use chart paper to share whether the article aligns with or contradicts their ideas of unit and lesson design.

DIRECTIONS

1. Participants at each table will be assigned to read one of the *Big Ideas* in the article *From Common Core Standards to Curriculum: Five Big Ideas.*
2. As participants read their assigned *Big Idea* they will state the claim the authors are making regarding Common Core-aligned curriculum design. Participants will trace their reasoning and record claims and evidence in the table below.
3. On chart paper, record the authors' claim as a statement and create a bullet for each point the authors use to support the claim.
4. Participants at each table will share their claim(s), evidence, and reasoning while arriving at consensus about the information in the article. Appoint a reporter to state the claim and explain the group's reasoning.
5. The group's designated reporter will share out the authors' claim and evidence for each Big Idea. The large group will then discuss the discussion question.

Big Idea #:
Authors' Claim:
Evidence that Supports Claim:

Discussion Prompts: (Reminder, Notepad is available on page 33 to capture your thoughts.) 

How do Wiggins and McTighe's *Big Ideas* align with what we know about CT Core Standards-aligned unit and lesson design?

RESOURCES

- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2012). *From Common Core Standards to Curriculum: Five Big Ideas*

Part 3: Stage 1 of Unit Design – Desired Results

Part 3: Stage 1 of Unit Design – Desired Results

CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template

STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS – KEY COMPONENTS

Grade Level:	Month:	Length:
Unit # and Title:		
Unit Overview		
Summary of the unit with unit goals, essential learning activities (reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language tasks), central texts, Performance Task, and connection to units in ELA or other disciplines.		
CT Core Standards		
Strand, Grade Level, Standard #, Standard written out (Standards assessed in Performance Task or other major assessments are **bold-faced**. Standards assessed through daily formative assessment are in plain type)		
Understandings to Explore		
Students will understand that… (Big ideas to explore, discuss and uncover, reflect on, and analyze during the unit – may transfer to other learning and life experiences)		
Essential Questions		
(Ongoing and guiding questions that point students toward key understandings and push students to look for patterns, connect ideas, and consider strategies)		

Declarative and Factual Knowledge	Skills
Students will know… (Recall, memorize, define)	***Students will be able to…*** (Organize, apply, analyze, integrate, evaluate)

STAGE 2: EVIDENCE – KEY COMPONENTS

Performance Task(s)
(Description, Prompt, Standards. Full directions and rubric are in unit appendix.)
Other Assessment(s)/Evidence
(Tests and quizzes, projects, writing assignments)

STAGE 3: LEARNING PLAN – KEY COMPONENTS

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Vocabulary</td></tr>
<tr><td>(Definition provided or word defined in context within a lesson)</td><td>(Subset of words for extended study in the unit)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Resources</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Central Text(s)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Supplementary Text(s)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Art/Music/Media</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Online Resources</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Student Supports and Extensions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">May include:
Scaffolding and support for all students (Universal Design for Learning)
Support for specific subgroups of students , e.g., SWD, ELL
Extensions for students working above grade level</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Interdisciplinary Connections</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
</table>

Learning Plan for Unit (Title)
Lesson 1 Title:
Lesson Summary: 1–2 sentence summary of lesson activities, text, reading, writing, speaking or listening task, formative assessment, and homework if applicable.
Standards Addressed: (Can be standard numbers only.)
Lesson Vocabulary:
Materials and preparation: List of materials needed for lesson and any special preparation teacher must make ahead of time.
Lesson 2 Title:
Lesson Summary: 1–2 sentence summary of lesson activities, text, reading, writing, speaking or listening task, formative assessment, and homework if applicable.
Standards Addressed: (Can be standard numbers only.)
Lesson Vocabulary:
Materials and preparation: List of materials needed for lesson and any special preparation teacher must make ahead of time.
REPEAT LESSON OUTLINES FOR ALL LESSONS IN UNIT.

Activity 3a: Developing Stage 1 of a Unit – Standards

DESCRIPTION

In pairs, participants determine a focus set of CT Core standards for the grade level and/or discipline and text they have chosen, including **reading standards, writing standards, speaking standards, and language standards.**

DIRECTIONS

1. With a partner, choose a text(s) that you will use to design a sample unit. This text or text set may be one you have brought from your school or district, or one provided for you.
2. **Review:** Review the standards in the two sample curriculum units beginning on page 49 of the Participant Guide. Discuss with your partner the following questions:
    a. Do the standards work together?
    b. Are they "do-able" in one unit?
    c. Do they align with the selected text(s)?
3. **Do:** After reviewing the model unit, using the CT Core Standards, select grade level appropriate standards for your sample unit beginning on page 45 of the Participant Guide. Be sure to choose at least one reading, writing, speaking, and language standard. (Note: The template is also available on http://ctcorestandards.org so you can work in an electronic version of the template.)

Discussion Prompts

How can you support teachers in selecting standards that will work together and not be superfluous to the unit?

In your opinion, should teachers select the text(s) or the standards first when planning their unit?

RESOURCES

- CT Core Standards K–5 Vertical Progression Document
- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Sample Model MA Curriculum Units: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=913#kto5
- Appendix B: Book Collection
- Sample Text: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. "The Fisherman and his Wife" translated by Lucy Crane

Activity 3b: Stage 1 – Understandings and Essential Questions

DESCRIPTION

Participants will create one or two understandings and essential questions that will support the big ideas of the unit.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Review:** Review the understandings and the essential questions in the two sample curriculum units beginning on page 49 of the Participant Guide. Discuss with your partner the following questions:
    a. Do they require deep understanding?
    b. Are the understandings and essential questions related?
    c. Do they address misconceptions?
    d. Do they align with the text and the standards?
2. **Do:** After reviewing the model unit, create one or two understandings and essential questions for your unit. Be sure that they are aligned to the text and the standards and are focused on a deep understanding of the unit.

Discussion Prompts

What do you think will be the most difficult part for teachers in creating understandings and essential questions?

How can you support teachers with this section so they can continue with the unit design?

RESOURCES

- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Sample Model MA Curriculum Units: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=913#kto5

Activity 3c: Stage 1 – Knowledge and Skills

DESCRIPTION

Participants will write the knowledge and skills they want students to acquire throughout the unit, ensuring they are aligned to the selected standards.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Review:** Review the *Acquisition* (*Students will know…; Students will be skilled at…*) section in the two sample curriculum units beginning on page 49 of the Participant Guide. Discuss with your partner the following questions:
    a. Do they reflect grade level standards in depth and specificity?
    b. Are they realistic and measurable?
    c. Are there too many or two few?
2. **Do:** After reviewing the model unit, create a list of knowledge and skills students will know and be able to do at the end of your unit. Be sure they are specific, realistic, measurable, not redundant, and align to the CT standards you have chosen.

Discussion Prompts

Was this process more difficult than you imagined? Why or why not?

How can you support teachers with this section to ensure their unit is tightly aligned?

RESOURCES

- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Sample Model MA Curriculum Units: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=913#kto5

Activity 3d: Stage 1 – Unit Overview

DESCRIPTION

Based on the selected text, CT Core Standards, understandings and essential questions, and specific learning goals, participants will draft a unit overview that summarizes Stage 1.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Review:** Review each section of the draft unit that you have completed, including the texts, standards, understandings, essential questions, and knowledge and skills. Determine the key ideas that should be highlighted in a unit overview.
2. **Do:** After reviewing all sections of your draft sample unit, write a brief overview that will provide a summary of Stage 1 of your unit.
3. **Share:** Share your unit overviews with participants at your table.

Discussion Prompts: (Reminder, Notepad is available on page 33 to capture your thoughts.) 

What are some questions or concerns teachers may have about Stage 1 of the unit design process?

In what ways could you support your staff in addressing their concerns?

RESOURCES

- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Sample Model MA Curriculum Units: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=913#kto5

Part 4: Evidence of Learning – Building Performance Tasks and Assessments

Part 4: Evidence of Learning – Building Performance Tasks and Assessments

Activity 4a: Developing Stage 2 of a Unit – Performance Task

DESCRIPTION

Participants will view a video and also deepen their understanding of performance tasks as evidence of student learning.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Review:** Review the performance task section in the two sample curriculum units beginning on page 49 of the Participant Guide. Discuss with your partner the following questions:
    a. Does the performance task(s) clearly delineate expectations for the students?
    b. Will it reveal that students have gained understanding, knowledge, and skills key to the unit or could students complete the task without engaging in the unit?
    c. Are evaluative criteria made clear?
2. **Do:** Create a performance task for your unit. Use the GRASPS acronym located on the next page to ensure you have included all of the elements. Use the Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix starting on page 59 to ensure the task requires rigor to demonstrate deep understanding of your grade level CT Core Standards.
3. **Share:** Participant teams will record their performance task in the GRASPS format on chart paper. When completed, they will do a gallery walk and respond to the guiding question as a group.

Discussion Prompt:

How realistic (or authentic) can a performance task be if it is to be both engaging *and* an effective measure of student learning?

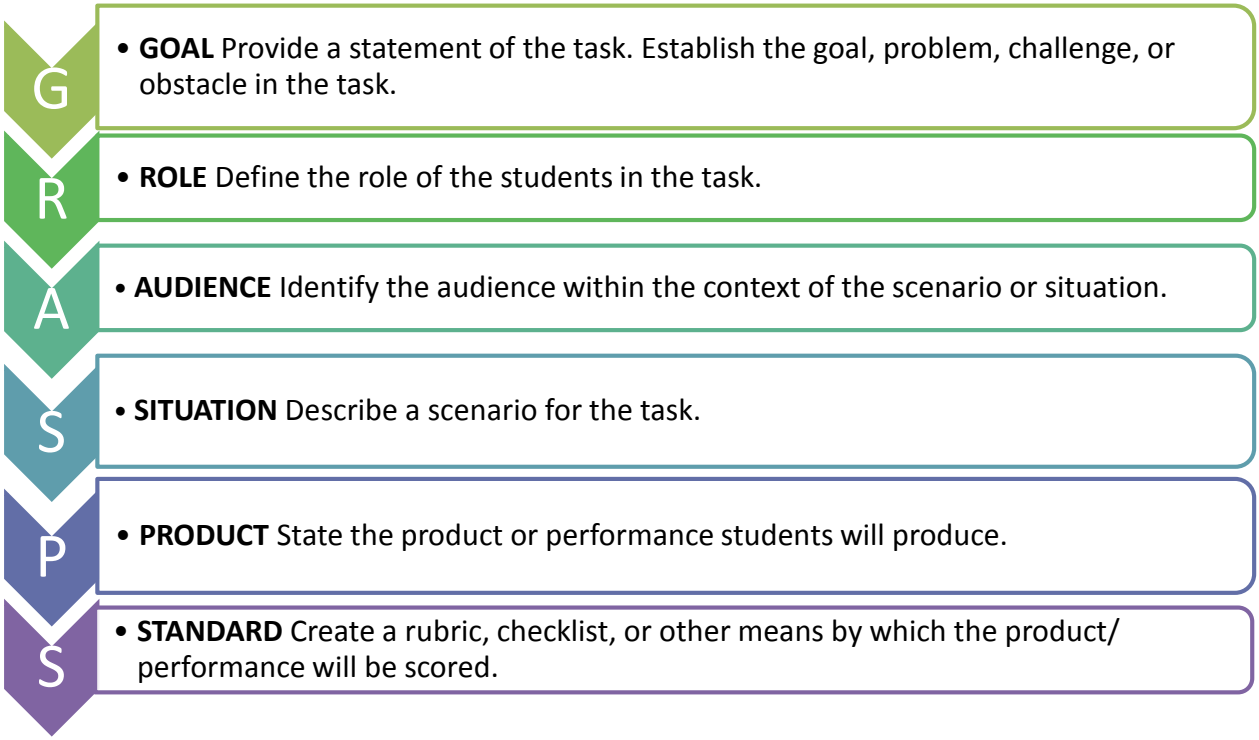
RESOURCES

- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Sample Model MA Curriculum Units: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=913#kto5
- Hess's Cognitive Rigor Matrix: http://www.nciea.org/publications/CRM_ELA_KH11.pdf

Video

- Hess, K. (2013). *A New Lens for Examining Local Curriculum, the Common Core, and Cognitive Rigor. Webb's Depth of Knowledge*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRAOefIDcxs

GRASPS



GRASPS' IDEAS

G	Design, Teach, Explain, Inform, Create, Persuade, Defend, Critique, Improve
R	Advertiser, Illustrator, Coach, Candidate, Eyewitness, Newscaster, Editor, News Show Host, Politician
A	Classmates, Neighbors, Pen Pals, Travel Agent, Jury, Celebrity, Historical Figure, Community, School Board, Government
S	The Context Of The Situation – Create A Real Life Scenario
P	Essay, Letter, Advertisement, Script, Debate, Story, Proposal, Brochure, Slide Show, Performance
S	What Success Looks Like: Scoring Guide, Rubric, & Examples

Activity 4b: Evaluative Criteria

DESCRIPTION

Participants will review the two sample model curriculum units for evaluative criteria and rubrics. They will consider the appropriate evaluative criteria for the performance task in their own unit.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Review:** Review the performance task section in the two sample model curriculum units beginning on page 49 of the Participant Guide. Look for the evaluative criteria/rubric for the performance task. Discuss with your partner the following questions:
    a. Are criteria derived primarily from Stage 1 goals?
    b. Do criteria correspond with the most salient features that distinguish understanding and masterful transfer performance?
    c. Are criteria generic or specific to this performance task?
2. **Do:** Consider with your partner – What would be the most important evaluative criteria for your performance task? In the table below, list criteria that should be included and its category.

Evaluative Criteria	Category: Impact, Content, Quality, Process

RESOURCES

- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2012) *Understanding by design guide to advanced concepts in creating and reviewing units.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Resources for rubrics:
  - Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, Descriptions of Practice and Training Test User Guide. Retrieved from http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/resources/#rubrics
  - Elk Grove Unified School District, Elk Grove, CA sample rubrics. Retrieved from http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/educators/ela/rubrics-k-12/.
  - RubiStar is a free tool to help teachers create quality rubrics. Retrieved from http://rubistar.4teachers.org
  - iRubric is a free comprehensive rubric development, assessment, and sharing tool. Retrieved from http://www.rcampus.com/indexrubric.cfm

Discussion Prompts: (Reminder, Notepad is available on page 34 to capture your thoughts.) 

What will be the most challenging task for teachers within your school/district when creating performance tasks and aligned evaluative criteria?

What supports or tools will be needed as teachers begin to create performance tasks and evaluative criteria to assess student learning?

Part 5: Stage 3 – Designing Learning

Part 5: Stage 3 – Designing Learning

Activity 5: The Learning Plan

DESCRIPTION

In Activity 5, participants will be creating a learning plan for their unit by identifying 4–5 steps that will ensure students meet the learning goals of their draft unit.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Review**: Review the learning plan for the two sample model curriculum units. Can you trace a path from the learning goals to the performance task?
2. **Do:** With your partner, create a learning plan by identifying key steps that will support student success on the performance task. Fill in as much detail as possible for each of the lessons in the CT Sample Unit Template.

Discussion Prompts: (Reminder, Notepad is available on page 34 to capture your thoughts.) 

When reviewing your learning plan, did you discover that in order for your students to be successful on the performance task, they needed additional learning? What would you change – the task or the learning goals?

What tools or supports may be needed for teachers to ensure the learning plan aligns to the performance task in Stage 2 and the CT Core Standards and learning goals in Stage 1?

RESOURCES

- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template
- Sample Model MA Curriculum Units: http://ctcorestandards.org/?page_id=913#kto5

Part 6: Supporting Teachers in Unit Design

Part 6: Supporting Teachers in Unit Design

Activity 6: Supporting Teachers in Unit Design

DESCRIPTION

Participants will review the entire unit design process and discuss the challenges they encountered during development. As a group, participants will reflect on challenges teachers will encounter as they create units and what can be put in place to support their work.

DIRECTIONS

1. With your partner, review the unit plan you created. Reflect on the challenges that you encountered working on all stages of the plan and discuss what you found to be the most difficult.
2. With your table, create a poster like the chart below. List the challenges that you believe teachers may encounter when developing units aligned to the CT Core Standards. For each challenge listed, brainstorm supports that coaches can provide to assist teachers in the unit development process.

Challenges	Supports

3. Look at the posters for all the groups and discuss the prompt below.

Discussion Prompt: (Reminder, Notepad is available on page 34 to capture your thoughts.) 

What areas did participants think were the most challenging? Were there similarities between groups? How can this information be helpful as you plan to support other staff members?

RESOURCES

- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2012) *Understanding by design guide to advanced concepts in creating and reviewing units*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- CT Systems of Professional Learning – Sample Unit Template

Part 7: Reflection and Planning

Part 7: Reflection and Planning

Activity 7: Action Planning

DIRECTIONS

1. Work with your school or district team, or with a job-alike partner from another district, to reflect on today's learning.
2. Together, develop a strategy for sharing Module 4's key messages and resources (e.g., presentation, resource links, and aligned instructional practices) with colleagues back at your schools.

Key Messages about CCS-ELA & Literacy from Module 4	Strategies and Resources
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Closing Activities

Post-Assessment–CCS-ELA & Literacy

Instructions: Check the box on the scale that best represents your knowledge or feelings about the CCS-ELA & Literacy in your classroom**.**

Self-Assessment Questions	No	Somewhat	Yes	Absolutely, and I could teach it to someone else
	1	2	3	4
I have a deep understanding of unit design with alignment to the CCS-ELA & Literacy and the instructional shifts.				
I know how to develop learning goals, understandings, and essential questions that are aligned to the CT Core Standards.				
I understand how to use the Cognitive Rigor Matrix when designing units, lessons, and assessments.				
I know how to develop performance tasks and rubrics that are aligned to my learning goals.				
I understand how learning plans and formative assessment provide a framework for lesson design.				
I am able to facilitate collaborative conversations and professional learning for my colleagues related to the key components of this module on unit and lesson design aligned to the CT Core Standards.				

Session Evaluation

Thank you for attending today's session. Your feedback is very important to us! Please fill out a short survey about today's session.

The survey is located here: http://surveys.pcgus.com/s3/CT-ELA-Module-4-K-5.

Notepad for Module 4

Part 1: Sharing Successes and Challenges.

Record any ideas you have gained from your discussion regarding successes and challenges.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 2: Overview of Unit and Lesson Design – Essential Question: *How must curriculum design change in order to meet the requirements of the CT Core Standards and instructional shifts*?

Record your thinking regarding this question.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: Stage 1 of Unit Design – Desired Results

Record notes about anything you think was significant from this activity that can be applied to unit design work in your school or district.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 4: Stage 2 of Unit Design – Evidence

Record notes about anything you think was significant from this section that can be applied to designing performance tasks in your school or district.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 5: Stage 3 of Unit Design – Learning Plan

Record notes about anything you think was significant from this section that can be applied to unit and lesson work in your school or district.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 6: Supporting Teachers in Unit Design

Record notes about anything you think was significant from this section that can be applied to supporting teachers in your school or district.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 7: Reflection and Planning

Record any ideas you have for how you might use the module content in your school or district.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix

Activity 2: From Common Core Standards to Curriculum: Five Big Ideas*

Big Idea 1: pgs. 35-36
Big Idea 2: pgs. 36-37
Big Idea 3: pgs. 37-39
Big Idea 4: pgs. 39-42
Big Idea 5: pgs. 42-43

by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins

In this article, we explore five big ideas about the Common Core State Standards and their translation into a curriculum. As with most big ideas, these Standards are in some ways obvious but may also be counter-intuitive and prone to misunderstanding. We highlight potential misconceptions in working with the Standards, and offer recommendations for designing a coherent curriculum and assessment system for realizing their promise.

Big Idea # 1 – The Common Core Standards have new emphases and require a careful reading.

In our travels around the country since the Common Core Standards were released, we sometimes hear comments such as, "Oh, here we go again;" "Same old wine in a new bottle;" or "We already do all of this." Such reactions are not surprising given the fact that we *have* been here before. A focus on Standards is not new. However, it a misconception to assume that these Standards merely require minor tweaks to our curriculum and instructional practices. In fact, the authors of the Mathematics Standards anticipated this reaction and caution against it: "These Standards are not intended to be new names for old ways of doing business." (p 5) Merely trying to retrofit the Standards to typical teaching and testing practices will undermine the effort.

A related misconception in working with the Common Core is evident when teachers turn immediately to the grade level Standards listed for their grade or course to plan their teaching. Such an action is reasonable; after all, isn't that what they are supposed to teach? While understandable, we advise against zeroing in on the grade-level Standards *before* a careful examination of the goals and structure of the overall documents.

To invoke a construction analogy: Think of the grade level standards as building materials. As a construction supervisor, we wouldn't simply drop off materials and tools at a worksite and have the workers "go at it." Instead, we would begin with a blueprint – an overall vision of the desired building to guide its construction. Without an overall end in mind, teacher scan create wonderful individual rooms that won't necessarily fit together within and across floors or achieve the intended results.

The Common Core Standards have been developed with long-term outcomes in mind (e.g., College and Career Anchor Standards in English Language Arts), and their components are intended to work together

(e.g., Content *and* Practice Standards in mathematics). This point is highlighted in a recently released publication, *Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics* (July 2012):

> *"'The Standards' refers to all elements of the design – the wording of domain headings, cluster headings, and individual statements; the text of the grade level introductions and high school category descriptions; the placement of the standards for mathematical practice at each grade level. The pieces are designed to fit together, and the standards document fits them together, presenting a coherent whole where the connections within grades and the flows of ideas across grades..."*

It is imperative that educators understand the intent and structure of the Standards in order to work with them most effectively. Accordingly, we recommend that schools set the expectation and schedule the time for staff to read and discuss the Standards, beginning with the "front matter," *not* the grade-level Standards. We also recommend that staff reading and discussion be guided by an essential question: *What are the new distinctions in these Standards and what do they mean for our practice?* Since the Standards are complex texts and demand a "close" reading, we recommend that staff carefully examine the table of contents and the organizational structure; the headers (e.g., Design Considerations; What is Not Covered, etc.), the components (e.g., Anchor Standards and Foundational Skills for ELA; Standards for Mathematical Practice), and the Appendices (ELA).

Following a thorough reading of these introductory sections, discuss the changing instructional emphases called for by the Standards and their implications. For example, the ELA Standards demand a greater balance between reading informational and literary texts, and stress the use of text-based evidence to support argumentation in writing and speaking. The Mathematics Standards accentuate the focus on a smaller set of conceptually larger ideas that spiral across the grades (as opposed to simply "covering" numerous skills) with an emphasis on meaningful application using the Practices.

We cannot overemphasize the value of taking the time to collaboratively examine the Standards in this way. Failure to understand the Standards and adjust practices accordingly will likely result in "same old, same old" teaching with only superficial connections to the grade level Standards. In that case, their promise to enhance student performance will not be realized.

Big Idea # 2 – Standards are not curriculum.

A Standard is an outcome, not a claim about how to achieve an outcome (i.e. a curriculum). Thus, the Introduction to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics states: "These Standards do not dictate curriculum or teaching methods" (p 5). A similar reminder is found in the ELA Standards: "The Standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. For instance, the use of play with young children is not specified by the Standards, but it is welcome as a valuable activity in its own right and as a way to help students meet the expectations in this document… The Standards must therefore be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum consistent with the expectations laid out in this document." (p 6)

Indeed, these statements highlight the intent of *any* set of Standards; i.e., they focus on outcomes, not curriculum or instruction. The implication is clear – educators must translate the Standards into an engaging and effective curriculum. So, what is the proper relationship between the Standards and curriculum? Consider another analogy with home building and renovation: The standards are like the building code. Architects and builders must attend to them but they are *not* the purpose of the design. The house to be built or renovated is designed to meet the needs of the client in a functional and pleasing manner – while also meeting the building code along the way.

Similarly, while curriculum and instruction must address established Standards, we always want to keep the long-term educational ends in mind – the development of important capabilities in the learner as a result of engaging and effective work. In other words, a curriculum works with the Standards to frame optimal learning experiences. To shift analogies, the Standards are more like the ingredients in a recipe than the final meal; they are more like the rules of the game rather than a strategy for succeeding at the game.

So then, what *is* a curriculum? In research for our initial book, *Understanding by Design®* (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998), we uncovered 83 different definitions or connotations for the word, curriculum, in the educational literature! Such a variety of meanings confer an unhelpful ambiguity on the challenge of moving from Standards to curriculum. Worse, most definitions focus on inputs, not outputs – what will be "covered" rather than a plan for what learners should be able to accomplish with learned content. This is a core misunderstanding in our field. Marching through a list of topics or skills cannot be a "guaranteed and viable" way to ever yield the sophisticated outcomes that the Standards envision.

The ELA Standards underscore this idea clearly by framing everything around "anchor standards," all of which highlight complex abilities and performances that students should master for college and workplace readiness. The Mathematics Standards' emphasis on the need to weave the Content and Practice Standards together in a curriculum makes the same point.

Big Idea # 3 – Standards need to be "unpacked."

As suggested above, the first step in translating the Common Core Standards into engaging and outcome-focused curriculum involves a careful reading of the documents in order to insure clarity about the end results and an understanding of how the pieces fit together. This idea is not new. Over the years, we have suggested various ways of unpacking standards in conjunction with our work with the *Understanding by Design* framework®. (See, for example, Wiggins and McTighe 2011, 2012).

When working with the Common Core, we recommend that educators "unpack" them into four broad categories – 1) Long term Transfer Goals, 2) Overarching Understandings, 3) Overarching Essential Questions, and 4) a set of recurring Cornerstone Tasks.

The first category, Transfer Goals, identifies the effective *uses* of content understanding, knowledge, and skill that we seek in the long run; i.e., what we want students to be able *to do* when they confront new challenges – both in and outside of school. They reflect the ultimate goals, the reason we teach specific knowledge and skills. Unlike earlier generations of standards where transfer goals were implicit at best, the Common Core Standards have made them more overt. Indeed, the College and Career Anchor Standards in ELA specify long-term transfer goals, while the Mathematics Standards strongly suggest a goal such as, *Students will be able to use the mathematics they know to solve "messy," never-seen-before problems using effective mathematical reasoning.*

The second and third unpacking categories – overarching Understandings and Essential Questions – are like two sides of a coin. The Understandings state what skilled performers will need in order to effectively transfer their learning to new situations, while explorations of the Essential Questions engage learners in making meaning and deepening their understandings.

Here are examples of Math and English Language Arts, respectively:

	Overarching Understanding	Overarching Essential Questions
Mathematical Modeling	• Mathematicians create models to interpret and predict the behavior of real world phenomena. • Mathematical models have limits and sometimes they distort or misrepresent.	• *How can we best model this (real world phenomena)?* • *What are the limits of this model?* • *How reliable are its predictions?*
Determining Central Idea in Text	• Writers don't always say things directly or literally; sometimes they convey their ideas indirectly (e.g., metaphor, satire, irony).	• *What is this text really about? (e.g. theme, main idea, moral)* • *How do you "read between the lines?"*

The term *overarching* conveys the idea that these understandings and questions are not limited to a single grade or topic. On the contrary, it is expected that they be addressed across the grades with application to varied topics, problems, texts and contexts.

The fourth category, Cornerstone Tasks, are curriculum-embedded tasks that are intended to engage students in applying their knowledge and skills in an authentic and relevant context.

Like a cornerstone anchors a building, these tasks are meant to anchor the curriculum around the most important performances that we want learners to be able to do (on their own) with acquired content knowledge and skills. Since these tasks are set in realistic contexts, they offer the natural vehicle for integrating the so-called 21st century skills (e.g., creativity, technology use, teamwork) with subject area

content knowledge and skills. They honor the intent of the Standards, within and across subject areas, instead of emphasizing only the content measured more narrowly on external accountability tests. These rich tasks can be used as meaningful learning experiences as well as for formative and summative purposes.

Cornerstone tasks are designed to recur across the grades, progressing from simpler to more sophisticated; from those that are heavily scaffolded toward ones requiring autonomous performance. Accordingly, they enable both educators *and* learners to track performance and document the fact that students are getting progressively better at *using* content knowledge and skills in worthy performances. Like the game in athletics or the play in theater, teachers teach toward these tasks without apology.

The four categories that we recommend are initially unpacked at the "macro," or program, level to establish the equivalent of a curriculum blueprint. More specific course and grade level curriculum maps are then derived from backward from them, just as rooms in a building are constructed using the architect's blueprint as a guide. Practically speaking, this macro level work is best undertaken at the state, regional or district levels by teams of content experts and experienced teachers. Currently two states, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, have assembled teams of content experts to unpack their Common Core state standards in this very manner, and the Next Generation Arts Standards, presently in development, are using this same construct to frame the Standards from the start!

While we strongly advocate this type of unpacking and have witnessed its benefits, we have also seen the process become way too narrow and granular when applied at the "micro" level. Thus, we concur with the important cautionary note offered by the Kansas Department of Education about a misapplication of Standards unpacking:

> "'Unpacking' often results in a checklist of discrete skills and a fostering of skill-and-drill instruction that can fragment and isolate student learning in such a way that conceptual understanding, higher order thinking, cohesion, and synergy are made more difficult. Too often, the process of 'unpacking" is engaged in an attempt to isolate the specific foundational or prerequisite skills necessary to be successful with the ideas conveyed by the overall standard and is a common precursor to test preparation and reductive teaching.
>
> Although this process may be important work in some instances and can certainly be enlightening, it also poses substantial problems if those completing the work never take the time to examine the synergy that can be created when those foundational or prerequisite skills are reassembled into a cohesive whole. Metaphorically speaking, 'unpacking' often leads educators to concentrate on the trees at the expense of the forest."

Big Idea # 4 – A coherent curriculum is mapped backwards from desired performances.

The key to avoiding an overly-discrete and fragmented curriculum is to design backward from complex performances that require content. A return to the linguistic roots of "curriculum" reveals the wisdom in this outcome-focused view. The Latin meaning of the term is a "course to be run." This original

connotation helpfully suggests that we should think of a curriculum as the pathway toward a destination. As mentioned above, our conception is that curriculum should be framed and developed in terms of worthy *outputs*; i.e., desired performances by the learner, not simply as a listing of content *inputs*.

This is not a new idea. Ralph Tyler made this very point more than 60 years ago (Tyler, 1949). He proposed a curriculum development method involving a matrix of content and process components that would guide teachers in meshing these two elements into effective performance-based learning. As Tyler points out, the "purpose of a statement of objectives is to indicate the kinds of changes in the student to be brought about… Hence it is clear that a statement of objectives in terms of content headings… is not a satisfactory basis for guiding the further development of the curriculum." Indeed, the Mathematics Standards recommend just such an approach:

> "The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe ways in which developing student practitioners of the discipline of mathematics increasingly ought to engage with the subject matter as they grow in mathematical maturity and expertise throughout the elementary, middle and high school years. Designers of curricula, assessments, and professional development should all attend to the need to connect the mathematical practices to mathematical content in mathematics instruction." (p 8)

Thus, the first question for curriculum writers is not: *What will we teach and when should we teach it?* Rather the initial question for curriculum development must be goal focused: *Having learned key content, what will students be able to do with it?*

Our long-standing contention applies unequivocally to the Common Core Standards as well as to other Standards: The ultimate aim of a curriculum is independent transfer; i.e., for students to be able to employ their learning, autonomously and thoughtfully, to varied complex situations, inside and outside of school. Lacking the capacity to independently apply their learning, a student will be neither college nor workplace ready.

The ELA Standards make this point plainly in their characterization of the capacities of the literate individual:

> "They demonstrate independence. Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information… Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker's key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions... Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners,

> effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials." (p. 7)

These points underscore a potential misunderstanding resulting from a *superficial* reading of the Standards documents (especially in Mathematics). One could simply parcel out lists of discrete grade-level standards and topics along a calendar while completely ignoring the long-term goal of transfer. A curriculum envisioned and enacted as a set of maps of content and skill coverage will simply not, by itself, develop a student's increasingly autonomous capacity to *use* learned content effectively to address complex tasks and problems. Such traditional scope-and-sequencing of curriculum reinforces a "coverage" mentality and reveals a misconception; i.e., that teaching bits of content in a logical and specified order will somehow add up to the desired achievements called for in the Standards.

A related misconception is evident when teachers assume that the Standards prescribe the instructional sequence and pacing. Not so! To assume that the layout of the documents imply an instructional chronology is as flawed as thinking that since a dictionary is helpfully organized from A to Z, that vocabulary should therefore be taught in alphabetical order. While the grade-level Standards are certainly not arbitrary and reflect natural long-term "learning progressions," a rigid sequence within each grade level was never intended. The authors of the Common Core Mathematics Standards explicitly call attention to this misconception and warn against it:

> "For example, just because topic A appears before topic B in the standards for a given grade, it does not necessarily mean that topic A must be taught before topic B. A teacher might prefer to teach topic B before topic A, or might choose to highlight connections by teaching topic A and topic B at the same time. Or, a teacher might prefer to teach a topic of his or her own choosing that leads, as a byproduct, to students reaching the standards for topics A and B." (p. 5)

The implications of these points are critical not only for curriculum mapping but for the very nature of instructional practice. Consider this advice from a non-academic source – the United States Soccer Coaches Federation. In *Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in The U.S.,* the Federation recommends a change in the soccer "curriculum" of practice:

> "When conducting training sessions, there needs to be a greater reliance on game oriented training that is player centered and enables players to explore and arrive at solutions while they play. This is in contrast to the 'coach centered' training that has been the mainstay of coaching methodology over the years. 'Game centered training' implies that the primary training environment is the game as opposed to training players in 'drill' type environments. This is not to say that there is not a time for a more 'direct' approach to coaching. At times, players need more guidance and direction as they are developing. However, if the goal is to develop creative players who have the abilities to solve problems, and interpret game situations by themselves, a 'guided discovery' approach needs to be employed." (pp. 62-64)

We propose that this recommendation applies equally to teachers of academics as to coaches of soccer. In other words, if we want students to be able to apply their learning via autonomous performance, we need to design our curriculum backward from that goal. Metaphorically speaking, then, educators need to ask, what is the "game" we expect students to be able to play with skill and flexibility? In other words, we need clarity and consensus about the *point* of content learning – *independent* transfer. Then, we can build the curriculum pathway backward with those worthy performances in mind.

To design a school curriculum backward from the goal of autonomous transfer requires a deliberate and transparent plan for helping the student rely less and less on teacher handholding and scaffolds. After all, transfer is about *independent* performance in context. You can only be said to have fully understood and applied your learning if you can do it without someone telling you what to do. In the real world, no teacher is there to direct and remind you about which lesson to plug in here or what strategy fits there; transfer is about intelligently and effectively drawing from your repertoire, independently, to handle new situations on your own. Accordingly, we should see an increase, by design, in problem- and project-based learning, small-group inquiries, Socratic Seminars, and independent studies as learners progress through the curriculum across the grades.

Our point here is straightforward: if a curriculum simply marches through lists of content knowledge and skills without attending to the concomitant goal of cultivating independent performance, high- schoolers will remain as dependent on teacher directions and step-by step guidance as 4th graders currently are. The resulting graduates will be unprepared for the demands of college and the workplace.

Big Idea #5 – The Standards come to life through the assessments.

A prevalent misconception about standards in general is that they simply specify learning goals to be achieved. A more complete and accurate conception, in line with the colloquial meaning of the term, recognizes that standards also refer to the desired *qualities* of student work and the degree of *rigor* that must be assessed and achieved.

Think about what we mean when we talk about "high standards" in athletics, music or business: we refer to the quality of outcomes, not the inputs. We ask if work is up to standard, not whether we "covered" such standards as teachers. In this sense, the standards are at their core a set of criteria for building and testing local *assessment*. They tell where we must look and what we must look for to determine if student work is up to standard. Such information is crucial to guide local assessments and insure that these are validly anchored against national standards.

Ironically (and unfortunately), this important point is not made in the main body of the ELA Common Core Standards but in Appendices B and C. These Appendices are arguably the most important sections of the ELA Standards because there the authors describe the degree of text difficulty that students must be able to handle, the features that need to be evident in student writing, and the kinds of performance tasks that will provide the needed evidence. Accompanying samples of scored work illustrate the qualities of performance that must be attained to meet the Standards.

This performance-based conception of Standards lies at the heart of what is needed to translate the Common Core into a robust curriculum and assessment system. The curriculum and related instruction must be *designed backward* from an analysis of standards-based assessments; i.e., worthy performance tasks anchored by rigorous rubrics and annotated work samples. We predict that the alternative – a curriculum mapped in a typical scope and sequence based on grade-level content specifications – will encourage a curriculum of disconnected "coverage" and make it more likely that people will simply retrofit the new language to the old way of doing business.

Thus, our proposal reflects the essence of backward design: Conceptualize and construct the curriculum back from sophisticated "cornerstone" tasks, reflecting the performances that the Common Core Standards demand of graduates. Indeed, the whole point of Anchor Standards in ELA and the Practices in Mathematics is to establish the genres of performance (e.g., argumentation in writing and speaking, and solving problems set in real-world contexts) that must *recur* across the grades in order to develop the capacities needed for success in higher education and the workplace.

Our recommendation to construct curriculum around assessments may lead to a related misunderstanding; i.e., that we need to assess *each* grade-level Standard in isolation, one by one. We think that this view is due in part to the layout of grade-level Standards and to the look and feel of traditional standardized tests, in which very discrete objectives are the subject of most test items. This confuses means and ends; it conflates the "drill" with the "game." The authors of the Common Core E/LA Standards wisely anticipated this misconception and they caution against it: "While the Standards delineate specific expectations in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, each standard need not be a separate focus for instruction and assessment. Often, several standards can be addressed by a single rich task."(p 5)

In sum, moving from Standards to curriculum requires careful reading and thoughtful interpretation to avoid the predictable misunderstandings noted above, while building the curriculum backward from worthy tasks offers the pathway to the performances envisioned by the Common Core.

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About the Authors

Jay McTighe is an educational writer and consultant.
E-mail: jaymctighe@verizon.net. Website: http://www.jaymctighe.com

Grant Wiggins is an educational writer and consultant and President of Authentic Education.
E-mail: mailto:gwiggins@authenticeducation.org
Website: http://www.authenticeducation.org/

Activity 3a: Sample Unit Template

Grade Level:	Month:	Length:
Unit # and Title:		
Unit Overview		
CT Core Standards		
Understandings to Explore		
Students will understand that…		

Essential Questions	
Declarative and Factual Knowledge	**Skills**
Students will know…	***Students will be able to…***
Performance Task(s)	
Other Assessment(s)/Evidence	

Performance Task Rubric:

Rating →	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Evaluative Criteria ↓				

Learning Plan for Unit (Title)
Lesson 1 Title:
Lesson Summary: (1–2 sentence summary of lesson activities, text, reading, writing , speaking or listening task, formative assessment, and homework if applicable)
Standards Addressed: (use #)
Lesson Vocabulary:
Materials and preparation:
Lesson 2 Title:
Lesson Summary:
Standards Addressed: (use #)
Lesson Vocabulary:
Materials and preparation:

Lesson 3 Title:
Lesson Summary:
Standards Addressed: (use #)
Lesson Vocabulary:
Materials and preparation:
Lesson 4 Title:
Lesson Summary:
Standards Addressed: (use #)
Lesson Vocabulary:
Materials and Preparation:
REPEAT LESSON OUTLINES FOR ALL LESSONS IN UNIT

Sample Model Curriculum Units

Sample 1

Opinions Matter: Pre-Revolution Boston

English Language Arts and History/Social Science, Grade 3

Unit Overview:

The focus of this unit is on reading historically researched texts and writing opinion statements to respond to events occurring in and near Boston before and as the American Revolution began. During the first half of the unit, students keep a diary in which they state their opinion on events after reading texts and viewing video clips. Students then apply their knowledge of events and people, as well as their own experience writing opinion pieces, and complete a final diary entry expressing their opinion about participating in the rebellion and supporting it with facts and details. On the last day, students leave an anonymous copy of their diary page in an agreed upon location to be found, read, and discussed by students in another class.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Stage 1– Desired Results</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">ESTABLISHED GOALS G
H/SS
3.CS.5 Describe the difference between a contemporary map of their city or town and the map of their city or town in the 18th, 19th, or early 20th century.
3.5 Explain important political, economic, and military developments leading to and during the American Revolution.
ELA
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4 Determine the</td><td colspan="2">Transfer</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Students will be able to independently use their learning to… T
T1. Understand the power of words and images to transform lives and provide insight into the experiences of others and an understanding of cultures and historical periods.
T2. Communicate ideas effectively in writing to suit a particular audience and purpose.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Meaning</td></tr>
<tr><td>UNDERSTANDINGS U
Students will understand that…
U1. Massachusetts was one of 13 colonies ruled by the King of England.
U2. The King of England imposed a series of taxes that angered many colonists in Boston in the 1700s.</td><td>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS Q
Q1. What is a colony?
Q2. What was life like in the colonies and in Boston before the American Revolutionary War began?</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1a Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1b Provide reasons that support the opinion.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1c Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1d Provide a concluding statement or section.</td>
<td>U3. Some colonists wanted to remain loyal to the King of England.
U4. The Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party were important events leading to the American Revolutionary War.
U5. The battles of Lexington and Concord marked the start of the American Revolutionary War.</td>
<td>Q3. Why do people rebel or fight for independence?

Q4. How do you support an opinion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will know…K
K1. Academic and domain-specific vocabulary.
K2. Reasons that colonists had for either rebelling or remaining loyal to the King.
K3. The major actions King George took, and the colonists' reactions to them during the years before the war.
K4. The elements of a written opinion piece.</td>
<td>Students will be skilled at… S
S1. Locating Massachusetts on a map of the 13 colonies.
S2. Identifying differences in the geography of Boston in the 1700s and now.
S3. Identifying and analyzing various colonists' point of view about the rebellion.
S4. Writing opinion statements and supporting them with evidence from texts and other sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="3">Adapted from Understanding by Design 2.0 © 2011 Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, Used with Permission. July 2012.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Stage 2: Performance Assessment

Summary: Students write a final diary entry about events happening before the American Revolutionary War began, choosing a point of view on whether colonists should fight, or not fight, for independence from the King of England. In the diary, students support their opinion with facts about events that occurred at the time and reasons for their opinion. Those students who wish to take on a persona of a person during the time (for instance, an apprentice, a student, a farmer's child, a character from the readings, or even a real person, such as Paul Revere) and write from that character's point of view. Students leave a copy of their final diary entry in a pre-arranged location to be found, read, and discussed by students in another class.

Student Directions:

Performance Task: *You have read about the events and people (both real and imagined) in Boston in the years before the American Revolution began. You have made many comments on the events. Now it's time to write your final diary entry about one or more of the events in your diary.*

Goal: Your goal is to show what you have learned about writing an opinion and supporting it with facts and details. You can choose to "be" a real person in 1770s, such as Paul Revere. You can be Ethan or one of the people he met on his trip around Boston that you read about in *Colonial Voices: Hear Them Speak*. You can choose to make up someone from that time, such as a child living on a farm just outside Boston or a child of a wealthy family in Boston. Or you can choose to be yourself now or as a time traveler. You will write events of the 1770s in your diary entry.

Audience: You have two audiences:

- The first one is your teacher, who will evaluate your writing based on a rubric.
- Your second audience is someone from another classroom. A second copy of your diary entry has a made-up name and you will leave it in an identified place in school for another student to find and read. (It's like leaving an object from long ago for someone to learn today what it was like in the past.)

Directions:

- Choose a person to "be." You can be real or made up, and you can be "alive" in 1775 or today.
- Give your person a name:
  - Popular girls' names were Elizabeth, Catherine, Mary, Alice, Emma, Margaret, Sarah, Hannah, Martha, Ellen, Abigail, and Ann.
  - Popular boys' names were Reuben, Ebenezer, Caleb, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Jonathan, William, Daniel, Richard, and Isaac.
- Decide:
  - Who you are.
  - What kind of family you live in:
    - Do you live on a farm just outside Boston?
    - Does your family own a shop? (What kind?)

    - Are you a member of a wealthy, very English family? (And live among Loyalists?)
- Write your opinion statement about whether to rebel against the King of England or to stay loyal to him.
- Choose one or more events and/or laws from the unit that will help you to support your opinion statement.
- Gather information to support your opinion statement to bring your reader in close to you:
    - Give details of what happened: names, actions, dates.
    - Make up or use quoted words that someone said.
    - Make your reasons strong.
- Decide how to end your diary entry. Be convincing about what you think!
- Follow your teacher's writing process steps and revise your entry.
- Make a copy of your diary entry. Make it look old. Leave it in the room or place where another student will find and read it.

Rubric:

	4 Exceeds expectations	**3 Meets expectations**	**2 Developing**	**1 Emerging**
Topic development *Includes an introductory statement and a concluding statement*	My introductory and concluding sentences are creative and they are different from each other.	My introductory and concluding sentences are original and they are different from each other.	My introductory and concluding sentences say the same thing in slightly different words.	My introductory sentence is simple and is the same as my concluding sentence.
Information from the text *includes specific facts and examples or details from the text*	My reasons have lots of details and examples throughout the paragraph.	My reasons show detail and examples for most of the essay.	My reasons have a few details and/or examples in my essay.	My reasons are simple, with no details or examples.
Facts and terms *Information is correct.*	My facts and terms are specific and correct.	My facts and terms are all correct and may be general.	A few of my facts and/or terms are general and not correct	My facts and terms are general and are not all correct.
Standard English conventions *Uses correct sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics*	My sentences are interesting and correct. I use excellent words linking my sentences to each other.	My sentences are interesting, and I use some words that link my reasons to my opinion. I have almost no mistakes in grammar and punctuation.	I think I have a few mistakes in grammar and punctuation. I use one or two words to link reasons to my opinion.	I think I have mistakes in grammar and punctuation. I do not use words to link my reasons to my opinion.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction

Lessons 1–2: Living in and Near Boston in the 1700s

Students view maps and images of Boston then and now and briefly go back in time, reading texts and viewing images to "witness" what life was like in the 1700s. Students read about the French and Indian War (1754–1763) as a precursor to the imposition of taxes by King George and the reaction of many colonists to them. Students gather content-specific vocabulary words and create opinion statements and record them in a personal diary. As a whole, the class tracks colonists' opinion statements and reasons and begins a chart of colonial occupations.

Lessons 3–5: Relations with England Turn Sour

Students learn about new laws and taxes imposed by the king, as well as the deaths of colonists at the hand of British soldiers, and react with opinion statements from both sides of the issues. Students continue recording new vocabulary and creating opinion statements—now with support in the form of specific reasons for those statements—in their diaries. The class begins a timeline of events before the war began.

Lessons 6–8: The People Speak

Students read and analyze various colonists' opinions of the Tea Act and prepare and present for the class, as pairs, an oral reading and discussion of the speakers' opinions and reasons for their point of view. As a whole class, students track the points of view of the speakers representing the various sides and record new vocabulary words.

Lessons 9–10: The Regulars Are Out!

Students learn about several watershed events just before the war began and continue to track people's opinions and reasons. They read and they view short videos and add to the timeline and Occupations in Colonial Times chart as they complete the puzzle of events in Boston on the eve of the war.

Lessons 11–13: CEPA: Making Up My Mind

Students choose to be themselves, or "be" a character from the past. They write a final diary entry stating their opinion of one or more events and/or laws studied in the unit, supporting their opinion with specific reasons and facts. Students revise their writing and submit it for formal evaluation and also make an anonymous copy of it to leave for another class to read and discuss.

Sample 2

Informational Text, Research, and Inquiry Circles: Animals and Habitats

English Language Arts, Grade 1

Unit Overview:

In this three week unit on animals and habitats, students are introduced to informational text and inquiry circles, and conduct their own research on animals and habitats. Students learn and apply content specific vocabulary that will assist them in future studies in science. Students are guided through the research process by three Essential Questions: What is a habitat? How do readers get information from informational text? How does research help us learn? The unit is structured around an Inquiry Circle (Immersion, Investigation, Coalescence, and Going Public) to accommodate various learning opportunities and learners. This unit should be used mid-year or later in first grade. It will take approximately fifteen classes.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Stage 1 Desired Results</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">ESTABLISHED GOALS G
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.5 Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1c Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.</td><td colspan="2">Transfer</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Students will be able to independently use their learning to… T
Generate open ended questions and seek answers through critical analysis of text, media, interviews, and/or observations.
Communicate ideas effectively in writing to suit a particular audience and purpose.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Meaning</td></tr>
<tr><td>UNDERSTANDINGS U
Students will understand that…
U1 A habitat meets an animal’s needs by providing food, water, shelter, and space.
U2 Text features help readers understand information
U3 Research provides information needed for written or oral presentations.</td><td>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS Q
EQ1. What is a habitat?
EQ2. How do readers get information from informational text?
EQ3. How does research help us learn?</td></tr>
</table>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions). CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using frequently occurring conjunctions to signal simple relationships.	***Acquisition***	
	Students will know… **K** K1 The definition of a habitat. K2 Vocabulary for talking about habitats including animals' needs, sets of animals, wild animals, shelter, and the names of five major habitats: Arctic (Polar), Desert, Ocean (Tide Pools or Coral Reefs), Rainforest, and Savanna (Tropical Grassland), K2 Text features add to comprehension of a text. K3 Information is presented in different formats. K4 Research helps us better understand a topic.	***Students will be skilled at…*** **S** S1 Using the academic and discipline-related vocabulary and concepts that are introduced in the unit. S2 Forming questions that can be answered by research. S3 Using the features of informational text to find information within the book. S4 Use information from sources to present on a topic
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Stage 2: Performance Assessment

Summary: This curriculum embedded performance assessment is composed of three different performance tasks:

- Students will write a research report, an informational paragraph, explaining the answer(s) to their research question(s). This part of the CEPA begins in Lesson 8.
- Working in small groups, students will create an informational display for a new zoo exhibit about their selected habitat. Each student will contribute a piece of art and some writing, such as labeling or explanation, to accompany their artwork.

Each small group will give an oral presentation about their habitat, drawing on information from the group display. The presentation can take a variety of forms such as a guided tour of the display, a skit, play or other informational presentations. Each student will have a role in the presentation.

Student Directions: A zoo has asked for displays about animals and their habitats. To share your learning about animals and habitats, you are going to work on three projects.

First you are going to form a question about a habitat or an animal in a habitat and use more than one source to research an answer to your question. You will write up your research in an informational report that explains what you have learned by answering your research question. You will also explain what a habitat is, and use new vocabulary words, as connecting words and details so the report sounds like good writing. You should use two or more books (or websites) in putting together your report.

Then you will work in a small group to make a new display for the zoo about habitats. Your teacher will assign you to a small group. Working together, your group will create a display that identifies and explains your group's habitat, identifies and explains some of the special characteristics of that habitat and the animals who live in it. Each of you will make some art and some writing for the display. All of your work will have to fit together to explain the habitat.

Finally, each small group will give a presentation about their habitat. You may act out the information in a skit, provide a guided tour of your display, or any other type of oral presentation. Each member of your group needs share some of the information. In your presentation you will have to identify and explain the special characteristics of your group's habitat and the animals who live in it.

Rubric:

	4. Exceeds Expectations	**3. Meets Expectations**	**2. Needs Improvement**	**1. Emerging**
Topic development: *The writing and artwork identify the habitat and provide details.*	Rich topic development Logical organization Strong details Good use of language	Moderate topic development. Good organization Adequate, relevant details Some variety in language	Weak topic development Limited organization and/or details Limited use of language	Little to no development of the topic Weak organization No details Weak use of language
Evidence and Content Accuracy: W*riting includes academic vocabulary and characteristics of the animal or habitat, with details.*	A sophisticated selection and inclusion of evidence. Accurate content	Use of evidence and accurate content is logical and appropriate	Evidence and content are included but are basic	Evidence and content are limited or weak
Artwork: *Art identifies special*	Artwork adds greatly to the	Artwork contributes to the overall	Artwork demonstrates a	Artwork does not contribute

characteristics of the animal or habitat, to an appropriate level of detail.	content of exhibit and provides new insights or understandings	content of the exhibit and provides details	limited connection to the content	to the content of the exhibit
Standard English Conventions	Control of sentence structure, grammar and usage, and mechanics	Minor errors in using standard English conventions but do not interfere with communication	Errors interfere somewhat with communication	Errors seriously interfere with communication Little control of standard English conventions

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction

Lesson 1: Students learn the concept of habitat and discuss the Essential Question: What is a habitat? (Immersion phase of the inquiry circle.)

Lesson 2: Students are introduced to five different habitats around the world and the idea that sets of animals live in a given habitat. Students start a group RAN (Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction an adaptation of the KWL) chart about habitats. (Immersion phase of the inquiry circle.)

Lesson 3: Students learn about informational text and the genre's text features through a read aloud of *I See a Kookooburra* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. They explore the Essential Question: How do readers get information from informational text? Students investigate a second informational text independently and are introduced to the concept of research. (Immersion phase of the inquiry circle.)

Lesson 4: Students continue to research habitats or animals in habitats. The teacher provides a mini-lesson to target a specific note-taking or research strategy. Students conduct research individually or in groups, depending on their interests and continue developing the class RAN chart about habitats. Students should share research findings at the end of each class. Students who have "finished" their research questions will need to develop new questions. (Investigative phase of inquiry circle.)

Lessons 5, 6 and 7: Students continue to research habitats or animals in habitats. The teacher provides a mini-lesson at the start of each class that targets a note-taking or research strategy. Students conduct research individually or in groups. Students who have "finished" with their research questions will need to develop new questions. Students share their research at the end of each class. (Investigative phase of inquiry circle.)

Lesson 8: Through modeling by the teacher, students start to review and transfer their reading notes to a template that they will use for writing their research reports. Students begin report writing, while others finish their research. The report that students are beginning is the first product in the Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessment (CEPA). (Coalescing phase of inquiry circle.)

Lessons 9, 10 and 11: Through demonstration and modeling by the teacher, students will write an informational report incorporating their notes, continuing step one of the CEPA. Each day starts with a mini-lesson which includes the teacher demonstrating a step in the report writing process. (Coalescing phase of inquiry circle.)

Lessons 12, 13, and 14: Students will plan the public presentation and the informational display, the second and third parts of the CEPA. Each student will provide some art and writing for the displays as well as have a role in the oral presentation. Students will be assigned to small groups, based on their research topic so that each of the habitats studied will be presented. (Public phase of inquiry circle.)

Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix & Curricular Examples- Writing				
Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	**Webb's DOK Level 1** **Recall & Reproduction**	**Webb's DOK Level 2** **Skills & Concepts**	**Webb's DOK Level 3** **Strategic Thinking/ Reasoning**	**Webb's DOK Level 4** **Extended Thinking**
Remember Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify				
Understand Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion), predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	○ Describe or define facts, details, terms ○ Select appropriate words to use when intended meaning/definition is clearly evident ○ Write simple sentences	○ Specify, explain, show relationships; explain why, cause-effect ○ Give non-examples/examples ○ Take notes; organize ideas/data ○ Summarize results, concepts, ideas ○ Identify main ideas or accurate generalizations of texts	○ Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence (quote, example, text reference) ○ Write multi-paragraph composition for specific purpose, focus, voice, tone, & audience	○ Explain how concepts or ideas specifically relate to *other* content domains or concepts ○ Develop generalizations of the results obtained or strategies used and apply them to new problem situations
Apply Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation; carry out (apply to a familiar task), or	○ Apply rules or use resources to edit specific spelling, grammar, punctuation, conventions, word use	○ Use context to identify the meaning of words/phrases ○ Obtain and interpret information using text features	○ Revise final draft for meaning or progression of ideas ○ Apply internal consistency of text	○ Select or devise an approach among many alternatives to research a novel problem ○ Illustrate how multiple themes

use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	○ Apply basic formats for documenting sources	○ Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph ○ Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing	organization and structure to composing a full composition ○ Apply a concept in a new context ○ Apply word choice, point of view, style to impact readers' interpretation of a text	(historical, geographic, social) may be interrelated
Analyze Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct (e.g., for bias, point of view)	○ Decide which text structure is appropriate to audience and purpose	○ Compare literary elements, terms, facts, details, events ○ Analyze format, organization, & internal text structure (signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts ○ Distinguish: relevant-irrelevant information; fact/opinion	○ Analyze interrelationships among concepts, issues, problems ○ Apply tools of author's craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential dialogue) with intent ○ Use reasoning, planning, and evidence to support inferences made	○ Analyze multiple sources of evidence, or multiple works by the same author, or across genres, or time periods ○ Analyze complex/abstract themes, perspectives, concepts ○ Gather, analyze, and organize multiple information sources
Evaluate Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique			○ Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for conjectures ○ Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods ○ Verify reasonableness of results	○ Evaluate relevancy, accuracy, & completeness of information from multiple sources ○ Draw & justify conclusions ○ Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application

			○ Justify or critique conclusions	
Create Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	○ Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept	○ Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience	○ Develop a complex model for a given situation ○ Develop an alternative solution	○ Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts ○ Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective

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Video

Hess, K. (2013). *A New Lens for Examining Local Curriculum, the Common Core, and Cognitive Rigor. Webb's Depth of Knowledge*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRAOefIDcxs