

The Main Idea's PD Suggestions for *Collaborative Common Assessments*

Below, you will find sample PD activities for each of the phases of the Collaborative Common Assessment (CCA) process.

Phase 1: Preparation for Creating Collaborative Common Assessments

A. *Prioritized Standards*: To create CCAs, have teachers identify the most important standards for unit of learning. Have teachers meet, review all relevant standards, and select 2-3 priority standards for the next unit. Teachers should identify the standards that have both *endurance* (support students' future learning) and *leverage* (useful across the content areas.) Once they have selected their standards, have teacher teams present their prioritized standards and describe their selection processes to one another.

B. *From Standards to Student-Friendly Learning Goals*: Next, teachers need to outline learning goals, or objectives, to define exactly what students should know and be able to do at the end of a unit of learning. Standards are usually too broad, so have teachers design learning goals. Learning goals must be clear and understandable so that students and teachers alike can use them to monitor progress. After teachers have developed learning goals based on their prioritized standards (Chapter 4), have them:

- 1) Share the goals with students in their classes, asking students to rewrite the goals in their own words.
- 2) Review students' responses in a team meeting, assess whether the learning goals are sufficiently clear, and rewrite as needed.

For example, the eighth Common Core Anchor Standard for Writing states that students must "Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism." A sixth-grade learning goal for the standard might be "I can identify reliable resources and use them to find information."

C. *Mapping Assessments*: As part of the CCA process, have each teacher create a map outlining all the assessments for the unit. Teachers all give the same CCAs, but classroom assessments are at individual teacher discretion, as long as they are covering the learning goals. The map helps ensure everyone on the team is assessing the *same* learning goals at the *same* level of difficulty. Below is a simplified version of an assessment map from Chapter 5. Collaborative common assessments are in the blue column, individual classroom assessments are in the other columns, and checks indicate which learning goals each assessment addresses. Have teachers review the example and the summary of Chapter 5, and then work in teams to create their own assessment maps.

Common Core Standards, Reading Informational Texts											
Learning goal 1: RI.3.2 Recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.											
Learning goal 2: RI.3.3 Describe relationships between historic events using the idea of cause and effect.											
	<i>H (homework) 1</i>	<i>H2</i>	<i>H3</i>	<i>CCA1</i>	<i>H4</i>	<i>H5</i>	<i>CCA2</i>	<i>H6</i>	<i>H7</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>CCA3</i>
Learning goal 1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Learning goal 2						√		√	√	√	√

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Phase 2: Design of the Collaborative Common Assessments

Have teachers read the summary of Chapter 5 or the actual chapter, then begin to work in teams to *design* CCAs following the assessment map they created above. Discuss the CCA design criteria in the rubric below before they begin. When teams have drafted their CCAs, have them assess one another's drafts: for example, the 7th grade team reviews the 8th grade team's assessments.

<i>Design Criteria</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Suggested Changes (if any)</i>
A. Questions and scoring aligned to learning goals			
B. Five or more questions for each learning goal			
C. A range of question types, including multiple-choice and open-response questions			

Phase 3: Delivery of Collaborative Common Assessments

To help teams decide among the different approaches to organizing CCAs, have teacher teams assemble lists of pros and cons for each approach below, and then choose one. (For additional details, teachers can refer to Chapter 6 in the summary or book.)

1. *Common Formative Pretests*: Pre-tests assess students' current levels of conceptual understanding and pique their interest in the unit. Sample questions might be "How many different kinds of birds can you name?" or "What existed before dinosaurs?"
2. *Frequent Formatives*: Teachers use quizzes and classroom work (do-nows, exit slips, etc.) to assess student learning.
3. *Interventions at the End of the Unit*: Teachers give a common assessment toward the end of the unit and then spend some time re-teaching, coaching, or providing enrichments based on the results of this assessment. Students then take a final assessment.
4. *Action Research*: Common formative assessments can be a tool for action research on a particular group of students, such as struggling readers. A team of teachers sets aside a certain amount of time each day for targeted instruction and formative assessment, and teachers meet weekly to monitor results and adjust instruction.

Phase 4: Analysis of Assessment Data

A. Collaborative Scoring: For the first step of the data phase, have teachers collaboratively score samples of student work and reach consensus on all of the scores. This process helps ensure fairness in scoring and promotes teachers’ professional learning. To collaboratively score, have teachers bring several randomly selected student responses to CCAs, a scoring rubric and/or answer sheet, and sticky notes to a team meeting. First, each teacher scores an assessment, conceals her score (e.g., by folding it), and passes the assessment to the next teacher. This continues until all the teachers have scored all the assessments. Next, they sort the responses on which they all agreed and disagreed into two piles. They discuss and come to consensus on the scores for the student work about which they initially disagreed. Examples of useful questions include: “What criteria were you using to score this question?” and “Can you tell me more about how you understand this part of the rubric?” After teacher teams complete their discussions, lead a general discussion about the process: “How did it feel to have these conversations?” “What did you learn?” “What was useful about the process, and how might you improve it?”

B. Error Analysis: Next, have teachers conduct an error analysis so they can provide targeted support to students. To do this, teachers will need to be able to identify which of three issues caused an incorrect answer: A wrong answer may result from a *simple mistake* (e.g., skipping a word), a *misconception* (misunderstanding an idea), or a *reasoning error* (being illogical, oversimplifying, etc.).

Have a discussion to help teachers understand the differences between simple mistakes, misunderstandings, and reasoning errors. Then have them conduct error analysis of student work, using a chart like the one excerpted below.

Sample Error Analysis Chart			
	Students who made errors	Types of errors	Instructional fixes
Learning Goal 1: Summarize the main idea	Jose Samuel	<i>Simple mistake:</i> missed word	Coaching in techniques for focusing on words; additional practice
	Kendra	<i>Misunderstanding:</i> main ideas	Additional instruction in understanding main ideas using new teaching strategy: visual images
	Naomi Melissa	<i>Reasoning error:</i> oversimplification	Compare oversimplifications to correct answers; practice identifying and avoiding oversimplifications

Additional Step: Instructional Improvements and Differentiations

Differentiations offer a key way to improve the instructional program in response to student learning data. Below are two activities to help teachers plan and deliver effective differentiations.

A. Interventions: To prepare to implement the instructional fixes they identified in Phase 4, teachers should ask questions about the *specifics* of implementation for each fix. For example, for the instructional fix, “Coaching in techniques focusing on words,” teachers might ask, “What are some useful techniques?” Encourage them to ask about whatever they need to know in order to implement the intervention.

Next, team members should find or determine answers to the questions. Some of the questions will be immediately answer-able; others may require additional research by team members. Below is an example of a chart teachers might use in this activity:

Instructional fixes	Implementation Questions	Answers or Next Steps
Coaching in techniques for focusing on words; additional practice	1) What are some useful techniques? 2) What should we use for practice?	1) Ms. Harris will research techniques 2) Create targeted handouts for next unit
Additional instruction in understanding main ideas using new teaching strategy: visual images	1) Should we create a small intervention group of students from all our classes? 2) Which member of our team has had the most success with this strategy?	1) Yes 2) Mr. Jackson – he will lead the intervention group.

B. Enrichments: After teacher teams draft enrichment plans, have the teams present the plans to one another. Have colleagues answer the following questions about enrichments on notecards:

1) Does the project increase the *cognitive demand* of the learning goal? (e.g., Does it add complexity or an additional level of rigor to the learning goal? For example, if the learning goal is to identify the main idea in a grade-level text, the enrichment goal might be to identify the main idea in a text above the student’s grade level.)

2) Is the project likely to *motivate* students? (Depending on their ages, students may be motivated by opportunities to work with friends, connections to interests, or other elements.)

If the answer to either question is “No,” colleagues should also write a suggestion for increasing cognitive demand or motivating students on the notecards. At the end of the presentations, have teams collect the cards addressing their enrichment plans and use them to improve the plans.