

5-15-2012

The common core standards : their history, current status, and implementation in my classroom

Anna Lassiter

Bank Street College of Education

Follow this and additional works at: <http://educate.bankstreet.edu/independent-studies>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lassiter, A. (2012). The common core standards : their history, current status, and implementation in my classroom. *New York : Bank Street College of Education*. Retrieved from <http://educate.bankstreet.edu/independent-studies/145>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Educate. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Independent Studies by an authorized administrator of Educate. For more information, please contact kfreda@bankstreet.edu.

THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

**The Common Core State Standards: Their History, Current Status, and
Implementation in my Classroom**

By

Anna Lassiter

Mentor: Bernadette Anand

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Science in Education
Bank Street College of Education
2012

ABSTRACT
**The Common Core State Standards: Their History, Current Status, and
Implementation in my Classroom**

By Anna Lassiter

This paper describes a history of national standards, a description of the creation and adoption of the Common Core State Standards, and an explanation of how the Common Core State practices have changed my practice of teaching English in New York public schools.

First, I define a standard and specifically educational standards. Next, I trace the history of national standards from 1960 until 2009 and then explain the creation and adoption of the CCSS by 48 states. My thesis continues with an overview of the support and criticism that followed in response to the CCSS education reform. After presenting this research, I give a close reading of the English and Literacy Common Core Standards for grades 6- 12 as well as an analysis of how they have affected my teaching over the course of my third year as ninth grade teacher in the New York public school system. I end this thesis with some conclusions that I have drawn from this research on the Common Core State Standards.

Table of Contents

My Transition from State Standards to National Standards	3
Definition of Education Standards	9
An Overview of How National Education Standards Were Developed in the United States since 1960	11
The Common Core State Standards	26
The Benefits of the Common Core State Standards.....	32
Resistance to the Common Core State Standards	37
Close Reading of the Common Core Standards for Reading Grades 6-12	42
Conclusion	53
APPENDIX A: List of Acronyms	55
APPENDIX B: How to Read CCSS Literature Citations	57
APPENDIX C: The Structure of the Common Core State Standards.....	58
Works Cited	59

My Transition from State Standards to National Standards

In my first year of teaching, although I was trained by Teach for America and had taught a year of English to students in Korea, I struggled to choose what to teach my middle school students at Multicultural School in the South Bronx¹. Which math skills did they lack and which ones were most important to cultivate? What content and which skills were on grade level? What did my students already know? What was developmentally appropriate? Was I giving them an education equivalent to what other students in the world? Where should I start? Where should my students be at the end of the year? These were just a few of the questions that haunted me in my first two years of teaching while at both Multicultural School and Bank Street College of Education.

My first year, I taught every academic subject in a 12:1:1 special education setting. My second year, I taught 8th grade English. Neither year did I receive any curriculum from the school to indicate what students had learned their previous school year, what types of comprehension models or systems they had been exposed to, or which models of learning were expected from the school. I did not even have textbooks or class novels to guide the years. In my school environment, these questions of curriculum and content seemed secondary to the questions of test scores and behavioral problems. Every professional development and staff meeting was focused on the latter two issues. Curriculum and standards (besides the actual test scores) were not considered by the staff.

I gained many valuable resources on curriculum development from my studies at Bank Street as well as lesson and unit plans that teachers exchanged on the Teach for

¹ The names of schools I've worked in have been changed.

America website. However, I found my planning to be defensive rather than offensive. Having to teach every subject to three different grades during my first year of teaching, I hurriedly lesson planned. I produced a plethora of lessons, but they were not focused towards some ultimate goal or idea of what students should know. Even well into my second year, I planned lessons based on the gaps that I saw in my students' reading and writing rather than an understanding of how their ELA learning fit into the scope and sequence of their K-12 schooling.

I did rely heavily on the New York State Standards, as those were the standards that were highlighted on the state test and in our professional development sessions. The New York State Standards for ELA read like a checklist. For example, in order for an 8th student to be proficient in "reading Standard 2" for "literary response and expression," they needed to be able to

- “ - Read silently and aloud from a variety of genres, authors, and themes
- Interpret characters, plot, setting, theme, and dialogue, using evidence from the text
- Identify the author's point of view, such as first person narrator and omniscient narrator
- Determine how the use and meaning of literary devices, such as symbolism, metaphor and simile, illustration personification, flashback, and foreshadowing convey the author's message or intent
- Recognize how the author's use of language creates images or feelings
- Identify poetic elements, such as repetition, rhythm, and rhyming patterns, in order to interpret poetry

- Compare motives of characters, causes of events, and importance of setting in literature to people, events, and places in own lives
- Identify social and cultural contexts and other characteristics of the time period in order to enhance understanding and appreciation of a text
- Compare a film, video, or stage version of a literary work with the written version” (1996, New York State Standards)

There were subsequent lists for “reading for evaluation” as well as “reading for information and understanding” (8th Grade Reading Standard 1 and 2).

I found myself teaching each of these skills in isolation. My daily objectives were often focused around these lists. When I review the lesson plans I made during my second year of teaching, I see the objectives “SW² complete character maps (based on character traits) of short story protagonists” and “SW identify the POV of different stories.” These objectives were from two consecutive lessons and reflected the New York State Standards. However, they did not build on each other or build towards a certain structure or system to how students learn or what students should be learning in the 8th grade.

The New York State Standards led me to believe that if I taught the items on the list, students would be able to read at an 8th grade level. There were so many items on these lists of what were called “performance indicators” (New York State Standards, 1996) that my teaching became robotic and rushed. I taught individual skills that required “inferencing,” “context clues,” or an analysis “of literary devices” (New York State Standards, 1996), all catch phrases from the standards. I did not worry about critical

² Refer to Appendix A for a list of acronyms used in this paper.

thinking or a big picture system of reading comprehension, the types of reading comprehension systems that we were encouraged to create in a Bank Street Class called “Reading and Writing in the Content Areas.”

At points in my second year of teaching and moments well after my second year when I reflected on my time at Multicultural School, I realized that I lost sight of what the 8th graders should be learning in order to be considered “on level” or participants in an education equal to that of a student in Westchester or Albany. Although I taught the New York State Performance Indicators, I did not know if my lessons were rigorous. The norms and standards that I had of education from my time in college and my fourteen years as a student at an all-girls prep school in Dallas, Texas, began to dissolve.

At Multicultural School, there was a school shooting. At Multicultural School, less than 30% of students consistently did their work. At Multicultural School, 8th graders had never typed an essay before. At Multicultural School, only 5% of 7th grade students were reading at a 7th grade level. I began to accept the norms and lower academic levels of my students in the Bronx. I lost track of where 8th grade students should aim academically and what types of behaviors and responsibilities I could demand from students. I lost sight of how I might scaffold, teach, and encourage them to get to the next levels. Multicultural School seemed completely separate and isolated from the schools where other Bank Street students taught or where I had gone to school.

I needed a curriculum or a stronger curricular vision in my first two years of teaching to anchor me, to guide me in what I should teach, to remind me of what other 8th graders were capable of doing, to give me some idea of what students had already learned. I wanted clearer standards and exemplar essays and books that 8th grade students

should read because I wanted to do right by my students and provide them with a rigorous education that I could confidently prepare and compare with the education provided by non Title I schools. In my first two years of teaching, I needed better standards, a model of reading comprehension, or better plans to ground me and make me feel more capable and less overwhelmed.

In this my third year of teaching, I have felt more capable and less overwhelmed at my new school than I did at Multicultural School. There are many factors that have made this my third year of teaching at Girls School in Brooklyn more purposeful and successful. I am at a new all-girls high school. I enjoy the lack of pressure from teaching a “non testing year.” I respect my administration as school leaders. I look to my co-workers for advice and knowledge. I have more patience with my students. I have developed an idea of how students learn to read. I feel safe in the school. I have more confidence and thicker skin when creating student relationships.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, I want to focus on my shift to the Common Core Standards in the third year of my teaching and how these standards have aided me to create a curriculum, lesson plans, and model for how students comprehend reading and writing.

Like my first two years of teaching at Multicultural School, in this year at Girls School, I inherited no curriculum. In the summer before my third year of teaching, even though I had two years of experience teaching English, as I prepared the 9th grade curriculum, I was still unsure as to what 9th grade students should know and focus on. I used the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to help me develop models and systems of how students understand reading.

Rather than supplying teachers with a different set of reading checklists that students should accomplish, I felt that the CCSS offered me a way to understand and explicitly teach how students make meaning with evidence and analysis. I was able to use the CCSS as a system for teaching reading, writing, and speaking, and this has made all of the difference. My success with the CCSS has provoked questions such as “Why are national standards only appearing now?,” “What are the benefits and drawbacks of the CCSS,” and “What kind of education are the CCSS proposing?” In this paper, I explore the conception of the CCSS and their implications for education reform as well as my own teaching.

First I will I define a standard and specifically educational standards. Next, I trace the history of national standards from 1960 until 2009 and then explain the creation and adoption of the CCSS by 48 states. My thesis continues with an overview of the support and criticism that has appeared in response to the CCSS education reform. After presenting this research, I give a close reading of the English and Literacy Common Core Standards for grades 6- 12 as well as an analysis of how they have affected my teaching in over the course of my third year in New York public schools. I end this thesis with conclusions that I have drawn from this research on the Common Core State Standards.

Definition of Education Standards

Generally, a standard is “a required level of quality or attainment” (Oxford English Dictionary). More specifically, Diane Ravitch characterizes education standards as “both a *goal* (what should be done) and a *measure* of progress toward that goal (how well it was done)” (Ravitch, 1995, p7). In the case of education, it is the goal, or what students should be able to achieve, and also the measure of how we know when students have achieved.

In education there are four types of standards which refer to four different aspects of education: content standards, performance standards, opportunity to learn standards, and world standards. Content standards “establish what should be learned in each content area” (Levine, 1995). These standards set forth a clear and specific description of skills and knowledge that students should be taught in school (Ravitch, 1995, p.11).

Performance standards do not focus on what students learn but how well they are learning. As Levine describes them they “define the levels of learning that are considered satisfactory” (Levine, 1995). These types of standards define and measure student achievement (Ravitch, 1995). NCLB presents performance standards because these standards do not define the curriculum of content that a student should learn or a teacher should teach but rather the level of “proficiency” that a student should achieve at the end of the academic year.

A third type of standards, opportunity to learn standards, regard the resources and conditions that are necessary for students to meet performance standards (Levine, 1995).

These standards are concerned with tangible equality and “define the availability of programs, staff, and other resources that schools, districts, and states provide” (Ravitch, 1995, p.12). These standards have been proven to be controversial within the government. In 1991, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) developed opportunity to learn standards that were so divisive that NCEST was splintered by its discussion (Vinoosokis, 2009, p.48)

Although delineated, the three standards work together to define ideals and benchmarks for students. As Ravitch explains, “Content standards without performance standards are meaningless. Content standards define what is to be taught and learned.” Opportunity to learn standards ensures that schools have enough resources to actually achieve both content and performance standards (Ravitch, 1995, pg. 13).

Finally, there are world standards. World standards take into account the levels of achievement that students in other countries are achieving. These cover both the content that students in the rest of the world cover as well as the expectations that are held for those students (Levine, 1995).

An Overview of How National Education Standards Were Developed in the United States since 1960

1960s

In the wake of the Civil Rights movement and the desegregation of public schools, Lyndon B Johnson was the first president to claim himself an “education president.” He looked to education as one method of fighting the newly discovered war on poverty (Vinovskis, 2009, p.3). In his 1965 State of the Union Address, Johnson claimed education as a way of creating a better life for Americans. He claimed that “we begin with learning. Every child must have the best education that this Nation can provide” (Johnson, 1965). Johnson ensured this “best education” and responded to a new war on poverty by introducing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in April of 1965. This act established a Title I program for low income students as well as increased government funding for schools that serve a large population of disadvantaged students. This act not only was a strategy for Johnson’s “war on poverty,” but it also established education as an important issue to the federal government, one in which the federal government was willing to pass legislation and become directly involved in the oversight of. As Johnson said in his remarks about ESEA, “ [It is the] most sweeping educational bill ever to come before Congress. It represents a major new commitment of the Federal Government to quality and equality in the schooling that we offer our young people” (Johnson, 1965).

Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society legislations involved the federal government in education in the second half of the 1960s, and education began to be an important

political issue (Caldas & Bankston, 2005, p.49). The first loose attempt at national standards was made in 1969 when the first National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was administered in order to measure and record student learning and educational progress. The establishment of this sort of national education thermometer was the first whisper of standards, as the NAEP tried to gather data to assess and compare the learning of students in different parts of the nation.

1970s

During the late 1960s and 1970s in the United States, there was a growing understanding that public education harbored many disparities between races, ethnicities, and genders (Richardson & Eddy, 2011). As a result, during the early 1970s, education standards reform was targeted at curricular diversity. With a growing awareness of the cultural and racial diversity of its students, schools attempted to reflect this diversity in the curriculum. They introduced different races and background in the canonical studies of literature or in the study of history (Vinovskis, 2009). The public was concerned with desegregation, race, and gender, and as a result, so too were public schools (Vinovskis, 2009).

After the NAEP, states began to develop competency scoring and testing. Oregon was the first state to develop this form of testing, and by 1979, 33 states had similar testing methods. The inauguration of state tests suggests that states were beginning to formulate performance standards or, at least, a standardized idea of what students should be learning in each grade. These tests, at first, were rigorous, however “states quickly reduced their difficulty as soon as it appeared that a sizable portion of high students

might not pass” (Vinovskis, 2009, p.13).

Although, this lowering of expectations on competency scoring ultimately did not impact national standards, the very creation of a state test suggests a percolating interest in standardizing what students would know at the end of each grade. Senator Claibourne Pell introduced the idea of national standards to the Senate in the late 1970s. He called for a national standard of what students should learn in k-12 education. However, when he asked to see a show of support for a national test or national standards “from an audience of hundreds, only two or three hands went up” (Levine, 1995). Although states were developing standards and tests, clearly, the federal government was not ready to consider national standards or tests.

It wasn't until the late 1970s that the idea of an education crisis emerged in the public. In 1975, the New York Times published an article stating that SAT scores had fallen over a decade. The College Board SAT Commission published a study in 1977 entitled *On Further Examination* that accounted for the decline of scores in the last decade. The commission cited an increase in the number of minority students taking the SAT, an erosion in learning, and changes in school practices (Ravitch 1995). The declining state of US education along with a budding interest in standardizing state or, in Pell's case, national education, opened up education for a national discussion and a more specific role in government and politics. In 1979, Carter responded to the growing importance of education by establishing the Department of Education, making it a discrete entity rather than part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Good, 2010).

1980s

In the 1983, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the education crisis exploded in the forefront of public interest. Terrel Bell, Reagan's secretary of Education, created the National Commission on the Excellence of Education (NCEE) to research the state of education in the United States and make recommendations for its reform. (Good, 2010). The report begins with dramatic and urgent language: "Our Nation is at risk" and continues to describe the ways in which other nations have exceeded our levels of education at a time when "learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the 'information age'" (National Council on Excellence in Education, 1983). The report concluded that not only was the nation losing ground in the global market, but it was also lowering its expectations in terms of all educational institutes which "[seemed] to have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them" (National Council on Excellence in Education, 1983).

The NCEE saw four types of deficiencies in the educational climate that needed to be remedied in order to deliver a standard education. For the purposes of this history on standards, I will only focus on content and expectations as these two aspects most explicitly address the ideas of standards. In terms of content, the report found that "secondary school curricula had been homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose" (National Council on Excellence in Education, 1983). As a result, there was no rigorous structure for what courses high school students needed to take. Twenty-five percent of credits earned by high school students, at that point in our history were in physical and health education or remedial classes. In terms of expectations (the levels of learning we expect students to achieve), the report found a

loose body of entities that express expectations such as grades, graduation requirements, college admission requirements, and state competency tests and found all to reflect extremely low standards for American students (National Council on Excellence in Education, 1983).

To remedy the content, the NCEE recommended that high school students take a required number of credits for graduation in each of the “five new basics”: English, mathematics, science, history, and foreign language. To remedy the expectations, the NCEE recommended the development of state tests and standards that would ensure that all students were performing at a high academic level of learning (National Council on Excellence in Education, 1983). Many point to *A Nation At Risk* as the first attack on the American education system as well as a “pre-cursor for future federal involvement” in the American education system (Good, 2010, p. 380).

A Nation At Risk positioned standards as a necessary tool for fixing the broken education system. After its publications, both the government and private institutions began to develop and publish iterations of standards. In 1982, Mortimer Adler created the *Paideia Proposal* in which he attempts to standardize the first twelve years of education for all students including a math continuum and a series of canonized texts to be read. (Richardson & Eddy, 2011, p 279). Adler and the Paideia Group focused their proposal on the reading of the “great books.” As Adler explained, “The great books, read and discussed with an eye for the basic truths and the equally basic errors or mistakes to be found in them, should be part of anyone’s general, liberal, and humanistic education. That should begin with what might be called ‘junior great book’ in the early grades, continue throughout basic schooling with more and more difficult books, and be pursued

on an even higher level in college” (Adler, 1988, p.300). Many critiqued Adler’s rigid curriculum for its elitism, assumptions on what is a “best” education, and assumptions about democratic institutions that would support this type of curriculum (Harvard Educational Review, 1983).

Other national standards followed *The Paideia Proposal*. In 1986, the National Governor’s Association (NGA) published “Time for Results: The Governors 1991 Report on Education.” This was the first document in which a part of the government offered national education goals (Vinovskis, 2009). These goals revealed the work of seven task forces ranging from Parent Involvement to School Facilities. One task force, The Task Force on Readiness, claimed that at-risk students should meet “educational standards” from school entry until graduation (Green, J., & Education Commission of the States, 1987).

In 1988, The Southern Regional Education Board released “Goals for Education: Challenge 2000” in which the ideas of standards were discussed and presented. This report claimed that by the year 2000, all students would be ready for first grade and “Student achievement for elementary and secondary students will be at national levels or higher” as measured by standards, or “national achievement goals” set by “schools, districts, and states” (Southern Regional Education Board, 1988, p. 11).

Even the National Council of Teaching Mathematics (NCTM) released a series of math standards that took 10 years to develop and outlined explicitly the skills and material that students should know each year (Levine, 1995). According to Levine, these standards were more skills based than Adler’s *Paideia Proposal*. This publication was entitled *Standards* and was based on data found by mathematics education researchers as

well as the experience of some mathematics educators (Hekimoglu, S., & Sloan, 2005). Many math teachers supported and contributed to the continuum of these standards (Levine, 1995). A debate about the validity of the *Standards* ensued where such topics as conceptual learning, constructivist learning, basic skills, and group work were critiqued and discussed (Hekimoglu, S., & Sloan, 2005).

President Bush's Charlottesville Education Summit was also the result of *A Nation at Risk* and the public's demand for more federal government intervention in education (Barton, 2010, p.22). This summit presented the two genres of standards that the United States began to reckon with in the aftermath of *A Nation At Risk*: content standards versus student outcome standards (Vinovskis, 2009, pg. 23). One organization, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, drafted a report titled "2002: A Nation of Learners" which "focused on content goals covering basic k-12 curriculum" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 23). The report laid out content standards that dictated the types of content and knowledge that students should encounter and master at each grade level. On the other hand, the Planning and Evaluation Service created "National Education Goals: A Strategy for Achieving Educational Excellence" which provided four student outcomes that "gave few specifics regarding subject matter content but insisted on improved student outcomes for each on the NAEP subject assessments. This type of performance goal or standard did not focus on curricular reform but rather demonstrated expectations of students on assessments (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 28).

1990s

During the 1990s, both content and testing standards were developed in the

private and public sectors. Bush's 1990 State of the Union Address recommitted the presidency to education by claiming that "by the year 2000, every child must start school ready to learn. The United States must increase the high school graduation rate to no less than 90%. And we are going to make sure our schools' diplomas mean something. In critical subjects, at the fourth eighth, and 13th grades, we must assess our students' performance" (Bush, 1990). In this address, Bush mentioned not only testing standards but also content when he decried that our high school diplomas must "mean" something.

Bush encouraged both testing and content standards in his America 2000 Program which encouraged each state to adopt national standards and partake in national testing (although neither test nor standards had been developed). Also, Bush and the Department of Education gave grants to private entities that would develop national standards in each subject area. "The department's intention was to have no federal oversight agency, but to encourage professional fields to shape a consensus about what students know and be able to do" (Ravitch, 1995). The America 2000 grants did stimulate a flurry of content drafts as both states and private institutions attempted to standardize curriculum.

In order to oversee the creation of state tests and standards, the Department of Education even created the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) to come up with testing recommendations as part of the America 2000 Program. In the early 1990s, NCEST developed opportunity to learn standards that focused on inputs rather than student outcomes. These types of standards would ensure that every student had the resources, practices, and conditions necessary to learn the content of the national content standards.

In March 1994, President Bill Clinton enacted his own strategy for improving

education by reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act under the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 and the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which seems to be an iteration of Bush's America 2000 Program (Moustafa, 2012, p. 7). These acts did not define a national standard but rather made states develop challenging state standards in at least the math and language arts contents areas. (Moustafa, 2012, p. 8). Goals 2000 also created a new federal agency, The National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC), that could certify state standards and review state tests and standards which the hopes that it could help set "higher content standards, and develop and align curriculum and assessments" (Vinovskis, 2009, p.144). Indeed, the act compelled states that had never had education standards to create their own. "Prior to the passage of Goals 2000... in 1994, 19 states had such content standards, and none had performance standards. By January 1997, content standards in math and reading were present in 42 states, but only 8 states had completed performance standards. At the end of the year 2000, all 50 states and the District of Columbia had establish math and reading content standards, and 28 states had performance standards" (Vinovksis, 2009).

The America 2000 program and the Goals 2000 Act encouraged the creation of content and performance standards, which in themselves implied a national curriculum. The Goals 2000 grant even funded the creation of a draft of national history standards. The Department and Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities funded Charlotte Crabtree and Gary Nash to create the first set of national history content standards. In late 1994, the national history standards were released to much criticism. The multicultural nature of the standards angered conservatives who wanted to downplay the follies of American history and emphasize the achievements of America's great men.

Lynne Cheney became the voice of the critique of the National United States History Standards when she published an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled, dramatically, and forebodingly, “The End of History.” She critiques the topics and contents of the standards,

“One of the most often mentioned subjects, with 19 references, is McCarthy and McCarthyism. The Ku Klux Klan gets its fair share, too, with 17. As for individuals, Harriet Tubman, an African-American who helped rescue slaves by way of the underground railroad, is mentioned six times. Two white males who were contemporaries of Tubman, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, get one and zero mentions, respectively.” (Cheney, 1995)

Here, Cheney, preferred a focus on Robert E. Lee rather than explore the negative events of the Ku Klux Klan and McCarthyism. To me, Cheney’s outcry not only reveals the feelings of conservative United States but also reveals the power that exists in a national curriculum or national content standards. This very issue can incite a dissident voice as well as exacerbate political and contentious issues such as racism, multiculturalism, and sexism, issues in which no government wants to entangle. Making knowledge “official” as Cheney claims of the National Standards of United States History do is precisely what any set of national standards or curriculum would do. Standards become so political because they formalize a perspective on the world, on how children learn, and on what a child should learn. This authority, and the contentiousness that it incites (as in the case of Cheney), in turn, makes the US government uncomfortable.

Cheney's article sullied the idea of a national curriculum or specific national content standards in education reform. Rather than come near the "radioactive" (Ravitch, 2011, p.17) nature of making knowledge "official", Clinton and the government abandoned the idea of national content curriculum and instead gave each state the authority to develop its own standards. In January 1995, the US Senate condemned the history standards in a 99-1 vote. This decision only reflected the new political perspective on national content or curriculum standards that, as Diane Ravitch described it, it was "political suicide" (Ravitch, 2011, p.17).

The growing political trend in the 1990s was the abandonment of national standards created by the federal government for the encouragement of state standards created by state government. The 1996 Palisades Education Summit's message was that states needed to set their own standards but that the federal government hoped that the standards would be "roughly comparable" (Vinovskis 2009). Indeed, Clinton, in 1997, called for the adoption of voluntary standards in each state but did not provide a recommendation as to which types of standards would be adopted. By the end of the 1990s, all states had adopted some set of standards as well as developed systems of accountability and assessment around these state standards (Rothman, 2012).

Because the federal government pulled out of the creation of national standards during the 1990s, the NGA created Achieve, an independent non-profit that would collect and disseminate information on national standards and assessments.

2000s

George W. Bush's presidency lasted the majority of the 2000s, and his No Child

Left Behind Act (NCLB) dominated national education policy for the decade (Barton, 2009). The act did not provide or mention content standards, but it did emphasize performance standards on state tests. Like Clinton's and Bush's policies of the 1990s, NCLB called for states to create their own state tests and standards and assign them with the performance levels of basic, proficient, and advanced. Students in grades 3-8 had to take yearly state tests in reading and math, and high school students had to take one test in their four years of high school enrollment. The performance standards in NCLB revolved around Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). NCLB legislation defines AYP as yearly student improvement according to a state's high standards as assessed on year-end state examinations. In order for a school to have achieved AYP, it needs to demonstrate that all subgroups of the student population have achieved AYP, including each subgroup of race, English language learning, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2008). Although this legislation made states responsible for creating content standards, the act did not give specific recommendations for what to teach or what content to cover in each of the grades.

As a result of the NCLB legislation, analysis of AYP data and performance standards on state tests dominated the standards based reform movement during the 1990s (Ravitch, 2011). With the accountability movement and charter school movement, catch words like choice, data driven decisions, charter school and merit pay overwhelmed the reform movement and ousted national content standards as an important reform issue. Educators and principals seemed to be more concerned with systemic changes in the schools, based on AYP, rather than on the content that was being taught in the classroom

(Ravitch, 2011).

While the federal and state governments were concerned with the systemic changes and reform of the accountability movement, Achieve, The Education Trust, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, and the National Alliance of Business launched the American Diploma Project (ADP). This project's goal was to identify the skills and knowledge sets that were necessary for success in college and in the workplace. In 2004, the ADP released "Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts" which identified common English and math academic knowledge and skill "benchmarks" that American high school graduates need for success in college and the workforce (American Diploma Project, 2004). ADP hoped that these benchmarks could be used by states when they created their NCLB required assessments and state standards. The federal government abstained from any discussion of national content standards, but the nonpartisan, non-profit ADP could.

The benchmarks that ADP delineated were based on qualitative studies that ADP did on the skills that professors deemed necessary for success in an entry level college course and also on research that economists provided on the skills that would be needed to earn wages in the most promising of occupations (American Diploma Project, 2004). The methodology of the ADP to create these initial benchmarks seems both academic because it was based on college professors and economic because the skills were also vetted by economists. It seems then that a high school education has the purpose to prepare students for academics but also to be contributing members of the United States economy. Out of the "Ready or Not" report was born the first iteration of the Common Core Standards (American Diploma Project, 2011). Throughout the 2000s, the

International Benchmarking Advisory Group, the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve together worked to align state's tests to the ADP standards and to research the correlation between this alignment and student gains.

Conclusion

The idea of standards emerged in the 1960s as a way to ensure equity during a time when American inequities were painfully apparent in the desegregation of schools and during the War on poverty. Not until education garnered enough importance and interest during the 1970s did education become a national political issue that demanded questions of standards, fairness, and execution.

With the formation of the Department of Education in 1970 and education's growing notoriety with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the ideas of national standards became a tool for ensuring not only that all American students received equal education, but also that the type of education offered in K-12 public schools was rigorous with high standards. Bush's Goals 2000 Program and Clinton's America 2000 Act of the 1980s and 1990s explored the possibilities of national performance and content standards by encouraging states to develop their own standards and funding grants for entities willing to draft national curriculum.

The controversy surrounding the release of the first national curriculum in 1995 halted any federal involvements with the creation of specific national education standards. Instead, the federal government focused on performance standards and AYP with the passing of NCLB. As state and federal government developed systemic

education reform during the 1990s, the non-partisan non-profits such as Achieve and the national Governor's Association developed the first iteration of private core standards that would later be developed into the Common Core State Standards.

The Common Core State Standards

Creation

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of national English and mathematics standards for K-12 education that 46 states have voluntarily adopted. They are “a description of what to teach, and not how to teach” mathematics and language arts (Moustafa, 2012, p. 9). The current iteration of standards was released in June of 2010, and many states and public institutions have been using the Common Core as a basis or entry point for reform.

The CCSS were born out of Achieve’s American Diploma Project, which wrote a draft of benchmarks that high school students would need to meet in order to be ready for college and careers. In order to mobilize and apply these benchmarks, the American Diploma Project Network was created. This network, a voluntary partnership between states, worked to compile and revise state standards to align them to the ADP benchmarks and ensure rigor (American Diploma Project, 2004).

In 2008, after gathering data and anecdotes from three years of the ADP Network, Achieve released a report of the work done and identified the standards that 75% of states with proficient and rigorous standards (as deemed by a third party) included in their mathematics or English standards (Watt, 2011). These common standards served as the seeds for what we now know as the CCSS.

Between 2008 and 2010, the NGA and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) brought together experts to transform the work from the ADP into sets of K-12 standards for mathematics and English. These organizations began with what

students should know by the time they graduated high school in order to be career and college ready and then “worked backwards” from there to develop each grade’s specific standards for mathematics and literacy (Moustafa, 2012, p. 8). There were many revisions, and teachers, education scholars, and education leaders were asked to help revise and comment on the standards. 10,000 comments were received on the initial draft of the K-12 standards (American Diploma Project, 2004). Additional advisors from Achieve, the College Board, the ACT, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers served to ensure that the standards were rigorous for both college and careers (Moustafa, 2012).

The final standards were released on June 10, 2010. By early July, 28 states voluntarily adopted the standards, and by the end of the year, 40 states adopted the standards. Perhaps so many states adopted the CCSS so quickly because President Obama incentivized the adoption by awarding states extra points on their Race to the Top application (Lewin, 2010). Although the federal government did not mandate or create the CCSS, it encouraged their adoption. The government made the adoption of the CCSS a prerequisite not only for Race to the Top funding but also for funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Moustafa, 2012, p. 8).

Basic Organization

The CCSS exist in two parts: the standards for Mathematics the standards English Language arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). The CCSS mathematics standards are distinct for each grade level from 3-8 and then for the high school. Each standard defines

one skill that a student should be able to accomplish at the end of his/her grade level. In each grade level, the standards are clustered into “domains” which are greater, unifying ideas. Examples of domains are “Number and Operations in Base Ten,” “Measurement and Data,” “The Number System,” and “Statistics and Probability.” Some of the domains overlap between grade levels, but not every domain exists in every grade level. In high school, there are six domains to be covered over four years. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

The standards for English language arts and Literacy, on the other hand are organization into Anchor Standards, which are similar to domains. Every grade has a standard for each Anchor Standard (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). I will discuss the organization of the literacy standards in more depth at a later point in this thesis.

EPIC conducted a comparison study between the CCSS and the standards for 11th and 12th graders in ELA and mathematics including states standards from Massachusetts and California (both of which are regarded as some of the most rigorous state standards in the United States), the International Baccalaureate standards, the Texas College and Career Readiness standards, and the Knowledge and Skills for University Success Standards (Conley, Drummond, Gonzalez, Seburn, Stout, & Rooseboom, 2011). This comparison explored the correlation of the 5 sets of standards and the CCSS in terms of 3 criteria: the content that is included in each, the cognitive depth that each set demands of students, and the breadth with which material is covered (Conley, Drummond, Gonzalez, Seburn, Stout, & Rooseboom, 2011). The study concluded that there is an alignment between in CCSS and the other standards in terms of the content and the breadth of

material covered. However, the study found that the CCSS demanded more cognitive rigor in geometry, reading informational texts, and reading and writing for literacy (Fleming, 2011). In short, although there is a great overlap between these 6 sets of standards, the CCSS are more demanding in ELA and in the geometry strand of mathematics.

Testing and Curriculum Implications

Arne Duncan contributed 350 million dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to develop standardized tests that would assess student performance on the CCSS (Moustafa, 2012, p. 8). Since 2010, two non-profit, non-partisan organizations have begun to develop national assessments aligned with the CCSS. Each organization is the result of a partnership between states and is currently in the process of developing assessments that would be rolled out for the 2014-2015 academic year (Phillips, 2012).

The first organization is the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) and includes the partnership of 24 states[i]. With the 186 million dollars awarded by the Race to the Top assessment competition, PARCC has developed a series of assessments for each grade level that includes a diagnostic test to inform teachers of their students' level (in terms of the CSS), a mid year assessment, and an end of year assessment. All assessments are fixed for each grade level, and every grade 2-12 would be required to take the tests (PARCC, 2012). Describing the structure of the assessments, "Kris Ellington, deputy commissioner for accountability, research and measurement at the Florida Department of Education, explained that regardless of a

student's status entering the school year, educators want students to finish the year performing at grade level. Fixed testing models determine whether that goal was achieved" (Scott, 2012).

The second CCSS testing organization, SMARTER Balanced, has the partnership of 24[ii] states (Porter, A., McMaken, J., Hwang, J., & Yang, J, 2010). Although it's assessments are also aligned to the CCSS, these tests are a series of computer adaptive tests in which questions become easier or harder depending on students' prior answers. SMARTER Balanced has also developed a series of mid year assessments that gauge the progress of the students (SMARTER Balanced, 2012).

Regardless of which test becomes dominant or more widely accepted, I find the very structure of these assessments to be a departure from the current state tests in which students take the test once a year, at the end of the year. I appreciate the idea of mapping students growth through multiple assessments during the year because I think it establishes an interest and focus on growth rather than on the grade level performance on one assessment per year. This assessment could most certainly deter students and teachers from identifying progress in students who start and end the year below grade level.

CCSS aligned curricula has been developed in schools and by private organizations like Core Knowledge (Phillips, 2012), but no coalition of states has developed or endorsed a national curriculum. I wonder why there is a more concerted effort to develop large-scale national tests before curriculum. Perhaps this is indicative of the Understanding By Design model in which educators plan backwards. Perhaps also, the content of a national curriculum would be too controversial or contentious for any

state to endorse.

The Benefits of the Common Core State Standards

In my research, I have found several benefits to the CCSS. The common set of standards that the CCSS could provide all states would ensure that all of our students are learning the same material, thus ensuring that students who move schools will not experience dissonance in the content of the school and students from different states are exposed to the same rigorous standards. Reviewers of the CCSS have found that the standards themselves are rigorous and on par with the standards of nations that are considered to have well developed educational systems. If executed correctly, the CCSS will not only improve student performance but will also improve the quality of the teaching in the United States. Finally, the adoption of the CCSS could cut costs for states in the creation and dissemination of content, assessments, and professional development. Below, I explain some of these benefits to the CCSS.

Educational Homogeneity

Before the CCSS, each state had its own set of standards that were covered each year. The content was not always aligned. An example of the varying misalignment of curriculum and standards of different states is Texas. Texas recently changed its history standards and content. “In grade one, Veterans Day replaces Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the list of holidays students should be familiar with. (Later, “building a military” has been added as one of two results of the Revolution—the other being the creation of the United States—an odd inclusion, given the founders’ fear of a standing army.) The

Double-V Campaign during World War II (blacks' demand that victory over the Axis powers be accompanied by victory over segregation at home) has been omitted from the high school curriculum. Japanese-American internment is now juxtaposed with 'the regulation of some foreign nationals,' ignoring the fact that while a few Germans and Italians were imprisoned as enemy aliens, the vast majority of people of Japanese ancestry who were interned were US citizens" (Foner, 2012, p.5). This varies from New York State's history standards which insisted covers the items that Texas eliminated in 2010 changes. Although history content is not yet included in the CCSSI, this degree of variance also existed in math and literacy standards (Rothman, 2012).

Without one common set of standards, it was difficult to compare the achievement and learned content of students across the country. Now, with a common set of national standards, the CCSS could unite the school experience of American youth. Students who move from Georgia to California or New York find it difficult to adjust to the curriculum of the new school because it is tailored to different standards and content (Dillon, 2010). The CCSS could make moving between schools more seamless for both parents and students who would have already be acquainted with the CCSS skills and content (Cizek, 2010).

State Equality

In 2005, 87% of 4th graders in Tennessee were proficient on the state test in mathematics. However, in the NAEP, only 28% of Tennessee 4th graders were proficient. In this same year 40% of Massachusetts 4th graders were proficient in mathematics on their state test, and 41% were proficient in the mathematics NAEP (Rothman, 2012). The

statistics illuminate the disparity between the public education in different states. Some states offer a rigorous education while others do not (Rothman, 2012). McCluskey, an author of numerous books on policy and the federal government, claims, “When left to their own devices, districts and states have either established low standards or weak accountability, or both.” (McCluskey, 2011). He believes that the CCSS will remedy these low standards.

Many proponents of the CCSS believe that national standards will ensure that all students in all states are striving for the same rigorous standards thus equalizing the material and content delivered in all states. In a survey by the Education Policy Improvement Center, professors of first year college students believed that the CCSS reflected the rigor of study in their freshman classes (Rothman, 2012).

Rigor

Some proponents of the CCSS believe that these standards provide a more rigorous benchmark for students to achieve. In order to make our students more competitive internationally, “national standards give schooling the chance to become more focused, coherent, and rigorous” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 24). With a more focused national content standards, the US can more easily continue its education reform and implementation (Cizek, 2010). Indeed, in a recent study comparing the CCSS for mathematics to standards in other nations that are considered to have rigorous standards, there was a 90% overlap between the CCSS and the other high achieving countries (Schmidt, 2012).

Prior to the CCSS, many states were providing math curricula and content that

was based on algorithms and procedures. The CCSS, however, “emphasizes understanding of the logical, structural concepts underpinning mathematics -- the idea being that understanding how and why algorithms work is as important as crunching numbers” (Sawchuk, 2012).

For English Language arts, the CCSS provide a focus on close reading, an attention to the author’s craft and construction of a text that is often required of college students. This concept barely existed in previous drafts of state standards (Sawchuk, 2012).

Improved Teaching

In comparison to prior state standards that were often long and lengthy, the CCSS have been reviewed by educators as clear, specific, and “user-friendly” (Dillon, 2010). Instead of focusing on numerous standards in every grade which as the previous the state standards did, the CCSS encourage teachers to only focus on the topics that are most important (Sawchuk, 2010). As a result of having fewer standards, teachers will have a clearer idea of what they should teach and become better at the delivery (Ames, 2012). Kahlenburg (2011), an author of two books on education as well as a fellow from the Century Foundation, explained the benefits of the CCSS to teaching: “While state standards are often weak and incoherent, providing little guidance to teachers, a strong set of common standards would free teachers from both writing the script and performing it. They could, like actors, focus on interpretation and delivery” (p. 1).

Having a common vocabulary and common standards could also help make teachers more efficient and innovative in lesson planning and delivery. If all teachers

have the same standards, they can more easily share content and curriculum ideas (Goldstein, 2010). This common set of vocabulary between teachers could “unleash a new era of development of instructional materials” (Chingos & Whitehurst, 2012, p. 6).

Funding

In the past, each state was responsible for creating its own standards, state tests, and supports for teaching these standards. The cost of buying textbooks, creating and administering state assessments, and delivering professional development before the CCSS was 3.9 billion dollars (Gewertz, 2012). Although transitioning to the CCSS will require overhead costs of new textbooks and new training (Gerwetz, 2012), one benefit of the CCSS is that they would allow states to, in the future, use open source assessments, standards, and professional development, thus eliminating the costs of producing these materials. It is possible that states will no longer have to spend their tax dollars creating state curricula because a national organization could do it at low cost. Instead of using state funds to develop performance indicators, curriculum, book lists, or tests, states could use their funding for other initiatives (Lewin, 2010).

Resistance to the Common Core State Standards

In my research, for every benefit of the CCSS, I also found resistance. Opponents fear that the CCSS exclude both students with disabilities and students who exceed grade-level expectations. Others believe that the standards are not rigorous enough in terms of the standards for both math and literacy. Funding and school implementation of the CCSS could also pose a barrier to success because in order to be successful, some believe that the CCSS demand more funds and better schools than currently exist in the United States. Finally, there are opponents who do not believe that national standards of any sort are relevant to any type of school reform or student achievement. Below, I have outlined several points of resistance that opponents to the CCSS have voiced.

Outliers

The mission statement of the CCSS reads, “The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). The CCSS set the minimum of what a student should learn each year and create an idea of what the “average” or the “normal” student should learn or achieve. Any construct of normal or average will have inherent outliers. In the case of the CCSS, there are students who do not fit the profile of an “average” CCSS student due to cognitive disabilities, language abilities, or experience.

Some opponents of the CCSS believe that the standards exclude the needs of disabled students. “The most time any state was able to spend on teaching the standards

was 81 percent of the time students were in school, and special education teachers covered even less of the content and standards” (Shah, 2012). According to Shah, in practice, it seems as though some special education students will never meet the CCSS due to the extra time that would be necessary to cover all of the material in an appropriate manner.

The opposite argument could be made for accelerated students. Students who have progressed beyond grade level might be stifled by the strict content and skills that the CCSS prescribe for each grade. One middle school math teacher fears that with the adoption of the CCSS, “schools and teachers [will be] forced to concentrate solely on minimum standards... [and] leave hardworking, motivated and gifted students behind. Many such students have been destined to a permanent state of boredom” (Williams, 2011).

These opponents seem to disagree with the CCSS in that they set an average for students and do not accommodate the divergent needs of the disabled or English language learners. It is as if the goals for education are too narrow because they do not account for a diversity of student.

Lack of Rigor

Still other opponents of the CCSS believe that the CCSS lack rigor. While some students who live in states with relatively lower standards such as Arkansas and Mississippi would benefit from the adoption of CCSS, students in states with well-developed standards such as California and Massachusetts will actually be submitted to less rigorous expectations when the CCSS are adopted in their states (Stotsky, 2010).

Perhaps the lack of rigor points to the fact that the CCSS were created not only for academic learning but also for career readiness. Instead of looking at students, the CCSS look at future employees (Kohn, 2010). “Lost are the virtues of liberal learning, going back to the Enlightenment when progressives first nudged educators to nurture in children a sense of curiosity and how to question dominant doctrine persuasively” (Fuller, 2012, p.1). Some believe that the CCSS stray too far from a traditional liberal education and thus are less rigorous.

More specifically to math, some have claimed that the math curriculum in the CCSS is “watered-down” so that true problem solving will not occur (Richardson & Eddy, 2011, p. 282). Although the NCTM generally supports the CCSSM, it also has concerns about the content of the CCSSM and when it is covered. For example, the CCSSM introduce statistics and grade analysis in grade 6, but the NCTM believes that this is an important skill to introduce in grade 3 or 4. (National Council for Teaching Mathematics, 2012). Also, the NCTM believes that the concepts of base ten, addition, and subtraction are covered too quickly in the earlier grades, not allowing ample time for students to really comprehend these topics (National Council for Teaching Mathematics, 2012).

Other opponents of the CCSSM believe the opposite: that the CCSSM are too abstract and academic and should reflect more real world situations. These opponents want more job and life preparation. “Today, American high schools offer a sequence of algebra, geometry, more algebra, precalculus and calculus (or a ‘reform’ version in which these topics are interwoven). This has been codified by the Common Core State Standards, recently adopted by more than 40 states. This highly abstract curriculum is

simply not the best way to prepare a vast majority of high school students for life“ (Garfunkel & Mumford, 2011).

Implementation

The CCSS provide an outline of what students should know in each grade level in order to be career or college ready. However, they do not dictate a method or curriculum for how to teach these standards. “The development and implementation of curriculum to meet these goals is left to individual states, districts, schools, and specifically the school leaders” (Eilers & D’Amico, 2012, p. 47). As a result, there are many questions and points of resistance to the implementation of the CCSS in schools. Opponents are not confident that school currently have teachers and administrators that are trained and ready to implement the CCSS.

In a comparative study of the CCSS and old state standards, researchers found that schools within one state varied widely in terms of which standards were presented in the classroom. In fact, these researchers found that low-income schools in different states with different standards, had more in common in terms of the math standards that were presented than did a low-income and high-income school in the same state (Schmidt, 2012). It is possible that professional development, current level of teaching, and the quality of administrators render school unprepared or incapable of implementing the CCSS to their instructional potential (Cizek, 2010).

Irrelevance

The ultimate effect that the CCSS will have on student achievement remains

unclear, and some even claim that the CCSS will have no affect on student achievement (Matthews, 2012). The Brookings Institute, in the article “Faith in Common Standards Not Enough,” claimed that in Brookings research, they found “no association between state scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and ratings of the quality of state standards” (Croft & Whitehurst, 2009, p. 2). Further, “There is no strong, or even mild, correlation—and certainly not a cause-and-effect relationship—between national standards and national performance on international tests.” (Tienken, 2010, p.16).

Close Reading of the Common Core Standards for Reading Grades 6-12

Anchor Standards

In the summer before my third year of teaching, I changed schools and positions to become a ninth grade English teacher in Brooklyn. My principal alerted me that my new school would be adopting the CCSS³. Because I did not inherit a curriculum (it is a growing school) and because I so craved an anchor for my teaching after my two years in the South Bronx, I looked to the CCSS to anchor and inform my curriculum mapping and the system that I have since adopted for teaching reading. As the CCSS began to dominate our professional development in my third year of teaching as well as the feedback that my administrators and district gave me, I have found it very valuable to study the CCSS closely for my subject matter. What follows is my close reading of the CCSS literacy standards and how I have understood and analyzed them in order to create a system for how I teach students to interact with a text. The CCSS have served me with a system for reading comprehension.

The CCSS literacy standards for reading have two components. The first is the set of “College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading” which describe the “broad” ten standard called the “Anchor Standards” that all grade levels are developing to some extent (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 35). The second component of the literacy standards are the specific standards which tailor the Anchor Standards to a specific grade level defining “what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 35). The grade specific

³ See Appendix C to see a diagram of the organization of the CCSS

standards for grades 6-12 provide a continuum of complexity for each Anchor Standard so that a teacher can understand how to make each standard rigorous and appropriate for each grade level.

The Anchor Standards map out a literacy model that, in my opinion, serves both to describe the way that students make meaning of a text as well as a way that a teacher can discuss and teach literacy skills. Nine of the Anchor Standards are divided into three categories “Key Ideas and Details,” “Craft and Structure,” and “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.” These three categories have provided me with three discrete steps for interacting with a text whether it is an informational text or a work of literature. I also have used these three steps of reading for lessons where students must read a film, painting, or play.

The first step is “Key Ideas and Details.” In this step, which spans the first three Anchor Standards, students must make meaning out of the text by “[determining] what the text says explicitly” and then making “logical inferences from it” (R.CCR.1⁴). After understanding what the text is literally conveying as well as the inferences with which an independent reading infuses the text, a reader then aggregates the literal and inferential evidence into a “central theme or idea, [analyzing] their development” (R.CCR.2). Finally, a reader analyzes how “individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text” (R.CCR.3) in order to carve out and specify the central idea or theme.

Having analyzed how the characters and the events of a text lead to a theme or central idea, a reader then moves to the second step (R.CCR.4-6,) which the CCSS deem

⁴ See Appendix B for how to read CCSS citations

“Craft and Structure,” and what I understand to be analyzing *how* the author created the text. If the characters, themes, and events of a text are the sit down dinner, the “Craft and Structure” of the text are the recipes. A student begins this author analysis by first “[interpreting] words and phrases” and how they “shape meaning and tone” (R.CCR.4). After analyzing singular words, a student “[analyzes] the structure of a text” including sentences, paragraphs, and chapters in order to understand how the author created and sequenced the main idea and theme (R.CCR.5). Finally, a student analyzes the text as a whole to “assess how a point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text” (R.CCR.6). These three Anchor Standards compel me and my students through the process of parsing out the craft an author uses to create a theme or big idea. In my classroom, the vein of thinking and discussion often includes literary tropes, close readings for word choice, and the parsing out of an arguments structure.

With an understanding of what the big ideas and themes a text conveys and well as the way that an author crafted these big ideas and themes, a student moves to the third step of understanding a text: “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.” In this step, a reader evaluates a text’s themes and big ideas for effectiveness and validity in comparison and contrast to other genres and texts. In this step, students might “integrate and evaluate content presented in different formats” (R.CCR.7) such as the film and written version of the same text. A student might also evaluate and integrate “how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take” (R.CCR.9). Also, and this Anchor Standard only applies to informational texts, a student might “evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text” to determine whether the author’s argument is sound. (R.CCR.8). This third step is

perhaps the most difficult because a reader must keep in mind both the ideas of the text and the ways that an author created these ideas in order to evaluate the overall text or compare and contrast it to other mediums and texts. Anchor Standards 7-9 help me and my students really consider and think critically about how well an author develops a theme or an argument, a character, or a paragraph.

As a teacher, I was really able to utilize this model of reading in my instruction. I explain and often refer to a “reading party” poster I make in which a character, an author, and a reader are partying around a cake. I explain that in order to understand a text, we must understand and analyze the characters in the text, everything that happens to them, and everything that they do and what meaning they reveal to us. This targets the “Key Ideas and Details” of the text. Next, I explain that the author is also in attendance. As readers, we have to understand how the author created and affected the character because without the author, the characters wouldn’t even exist. This targets the “Craft and Structure” of a text. Finally, I say that the reader attends the party because the reader must make sense, judge, analyze, and evaluate all of the ideas in the text. This, of course, refers to the step of “Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.”

When my students visualize reading as the interaction because characters, authors, and readers at a party, I find that they are better able to conceptualize all of the structures in the Anchor Standards and in the process of really understanding a text. Also, these designations help me to organize my lessons, our discussions.

When we are discussing a text such as *Romeo and Juliet*, my students can categorize what types of thinking they are pursuing in the text. If students jump directly to evaluating a text, I ask them about what the characters and authors did to form these

opinions. If students focus a lot about what the characters do and say, I ask them about how the author created these characters with his/her words which often deepens and diversifies the students' thinking. These steps also help me to make my lessons deeper and more diverse. I found in my first two years that I focused a lot on main idea and summarizing, or the step of "Key Ideas and Details." This year however, I tried to focus on "Craft and Structure" as well as "Evaluation and Integration of Knowledge," thereby modeling for my students and challenging students to join me in a more well-rounded understanding of a text.

In my third year of teaching, *Of Mice and Men* was the first full novel that we read as a class. I took my students through the first step of learning with several activities. We made character maps and sketches to understand whom each character was and how the characters developed. We analyzed George's killing of Lennie and whether or not it was justified through a debate. We had full class discussions on the themes of fate, ability, and justice. We created collages that depicted the natural environment and the description that Steinbeck gave about the setting. We collected images that recurred more than once and decided what meaning fit with the symbols.

In order to address the "Craft and Structure," I tried to create classes where students were encouraged to read closely and really consider the words that Steinbeck utilized. Students had to collect words that Steinbeck used to describe Curly's wife, the only female character, and then determine what types of ideas about women these words conveyed. Students made graphs of the speed of the story and plotted events in the book in terms of how much suspense or excitement they experienced as readers. After identifying excitement, students had to explain what types of words created these feelings

and then discuss the acceleration and movement of events and why Steinbeck would pace his novel that way. We considered the narrator and how he described Lennie to see if we could sense any bias towards him.

For the final step of learning, I really wanted students to consider the whole of the text. We compared the novel to the movie in terms of pacing, characters, and dialogue. If I were to study *Of Mice and Men* later on in my curriculum, I would ask students to compare the friendship in this text to that of other texts in order to determine what is the “ideal” friendship. Having these three different steps for comprehending a text really helped me to plan my unit on *Of Mice and Men* with rigorous and diverse lessons and activities that, I think, led my students to a fuller understanding of the text and its creation and themes.

Fiction vs. Nonfiction

As a teacher, I appreciate that the Anchor Standards are intentioned for both fiction and non-fiction texts. With the same model of comprehension for all reading, students will be more confident and versatile when they have to read and make meaning in other classes. For example, this year, the Global History teacher and I utilized the same ideas of author, characters, and reader when we discussed texts. In comparing student writing and reading, we found that students actually transferred writing and thinking skills between the two courses. One class reinforced the other which helped us and made us more efficient teachers. Additionally, the students more willingly connected history and ELA content. When students wrote DBQs using a primary source, they were able to discuss the narrator and events in the document, pinpoint the message through analyzing

the words, and then evaluate the validity of the source.

As I compare the “Reading Standards for Literature 6-12” and the “Reading Standards for Informational Texts 6-12,” I appreciate the similarities and slight differences in the iterations of the Anchor Standards. The similarities show me and my students that reading skills are transferrable between multiple genres forms. In analyzing the similarities and differences between each Anchor Standards for literature, and informational texts, I have deepened my understanding of what skills are necessary for analyzing and comprehending each type of text.

The first Anchor Standard is identical for both literature and informational texts. This seems logical to me as the collection of evidence is important for both types of text. The second and third Anchor Standards are similarly identical across literature and information texts. For both types of reading, students “summarize” (RL.2.6 and RI.2.6) and “analyze the development” of ideas (RL.2.8 and RI.2.8). The only way in which the second and third Anchor Standards are differentiated between fiction and non-fiction is that in fiction, a student focuses on the “themes and central ideas” of the text, while in non-fiction, the reader focuses only on “central ideas” (RL. and RI). For reading literature and reading informational texts, the “Key Ideas and Details,” Anchor Standards are essentially identical, demonstrating how, no matter the text, students will need to analyze how evidence, characters, and events develop big ideas.

It seems the “Craft and Structure” Anchor Standards differ between fiction and non fiction reading because in fiction, an author uses tropes to develop characters while in non-fiction, an author uses technical language to structure an effective argument. The fourth Anchor Standard deals with word choice. For fiction texts, the reading standards

require the reader to understand rhyme, repetition, analogies, allusion, word choice, and tone (RL.4.6-12) while for non-fiction texts, the reading standards require the reader to understand word choice, technical meaning, tone, connotations, and key terms (RI.4.6-12). The fifth Anchor Standard focuses on structure and is similar for both literature and informational texts. For literature, this standard has become the study of how paragraphs, chapters, structure, genres, and sections are created in novels and in poetry (RL.5.6-12). For non-fiction texts, this standard also focuses the reader on paragraphs, structure, and sentences but thrusts this understanding of a text's organization toward the evaluation of the effective of an argument (RI5.6-12). The last Anchor Standard in the "Craft and Structure" group is the one that pertains to the author's point of view. The literature iteration of this standard develops a reader's analysis of how the narrator is constructed and how the narrative point of view interacts with the author's point of view, the character's, and the reader's (RL.6.6-12). For informational texts, this standard focuses solely on the point of view of the author and how this point of view differs from the points of view of other authors, highlighting false claims and different interpretations of facts (RI6.6-12).

The third category of Anchor Standards, "Integration with Knowledge and Ideas," is concerned with combining analyses of different genres or sources in order to develop a greater understanding or meaning. For literature, the seventh Anchor Standard manifests itself in grades 11-12 as "Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama or poem, evaluating how each version interprets the source text" (RL.7.11-12). For informational texts, the 11-12 standard reads, "integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats as well as in words in order to address a question

or solve a problem” (RI.7.11-12). Like the standards for grades 6-10, both of these standards are concerned with how students can take different representations of a topic or work and compare and contrast them in order to gain a richer understanding of each of the texts or sources involved. The seventh Anchor Standards diverge between literature and informational texts in that the literature standard uses multiple texts to ultimately better understand the source text, while the informational text standard uses multiple sources to solve a question or a problem. The subsequent 6-10 grade specific iterations of the seventh Anchor Standard are similarly positioned (RL.7 and RI.7). The eighth Anchor Standard does not even exist for literature because it describes how to analyze and evaluate an argument, something that only applies to non-fiction. Finally, the ninth Anchor Standard determines how in literature students should utilize works from different genres to explore the “similar themes or topics” (RL.9.11-12) and how in informational texts, students should utilize different works from the same time period or concerned with similar topics to understand the nature of the interpretation as well as the time period in which they were written (RL.9.11-12). For this final standard, the literature strand focuses on themes and topics while the information text strand focuses on a historical period.

In my teaching, I have been able to use the same vocabulary and processes to teach both informational texts and literature because the standards for both are so similar. I have also been more accurate in explaining to students how the reading of literature and informational texts are different. Students in my class know how tropes can affect a work of fiction and how technical language and argument structure are critical for the analysis of historical or scientific texts.

Grade Complexity

Aside from the general organization of the Anchor Standards, the grade specific standards helped me to pinpoint how exactly a ninth grader should have progressed in each of the Anchor Standards. The grade specific standards, as they exist in continuums for each Anchor Standard, also help me to scaffold my lessons and discussion so that if a student was having difficulty analyzing the connotations of a word (R.CCR.4), then I could review the eighth, seventh, and sixth grade iterations of this standard in order to determine what building blocks might help a student become more proficient in this skill.

Last year, my students had trouble describing the tone we found in poetry. I asked them to articulate the tone of the piece and then explain how the author was able to create it. They were first overwhelmed by trying to pinpoint the tone, and then they were overwhelmed by talking about the specific language that created this tone. It was too great of a task.

To help me re-teach this concept of tone, I consulted the “Reading Standards for Literature 6-12.” The 9-12 standard claimed that my students should determine the “cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone” (RL.4.9-10). This “cumulative impact” was too broad for my students who didn’t seem to have experience explaining the cause of the impact.

I looked to the standards in lower grades to help me scaffold and find the vocabulary for this “cumulative impact.” In sixth grade, for this same Anchor Standard, students simply discuss the “figurative and connotative meaning” to analyze “word choice” (RL.4.6). In seventh grade students add the analysis of “rhyme” and “repetition”

to word choice in order to analyze the aggregate impact of words (RL.4.7). In 8th grade, students begin to discuss more sophisticated tropes such as “analogies or allusions” and how they construct the tone. Seeing the simpler iterations of the fourth Anchor Standard, I was able to go back to my classroom and break down tone into different factors such as connotations, rhyme, analogies, allusions, and denotations in order to help them develop the tools necessary for describing tone. It seems to me that the Anchor Standards are well scaffolded to build to the ultimate 11-12 grade standards and to help teachers get students there, even if they are not initially ready to perform as the standards dictate at their grade. This year, when students seem especially stuck with an aspect of reading, I hope to look again to the grade specific standards for lower grades to help me scaffold.

Conclusion

In my research for this topic, I have found that standards are an intimately political project. How could they not be? National education standards, and any standard for that matter, dictates the “norm” or the “average student”. The CCSS, which are the first national standards to be adopted by the majority of the states, make a national statement about how and what “normal” or “average” kids should be thinking. This is controversial in so many ways, and it is apparent in the resistance to the CCSS as well as the history of national standards where we distance ourselves from any sort of national standards or curriculum on the federal level. The “average” or “norm” always excludes someone: a political belief, a cognitive ability, a mode of thinking, a socio-economic bracket, a type of test taker. As Deborah Meier puts it, “Setting fixed standards for what students should learn means aiming either too low or too high—never on target for each individual learner” (Meier, 2010, p.23).

As controversial as the CCSS are, there are also benefits. They are user friendly, might increase the rigor of our education, and have already helped teachers to better their craft, myself included. Although I do not believe that the CCSS are the absolute truth as to how students develop and think, I do think that they will provide many teachers and schools with a common vocabulary for how to teach and think about reading and writing. I hope that educators and administrators will use the CCSS as a platform for communication and growth rather than an absolute for teaching. I think that the CCSS will compel a new set of standardized tests that might be better than the current state tests, but probably imperfect. I view the CCSS as a new draft that independent educators will re-write and develop and evolve into something even better.

As an educator, it has been extremely important for me to come to this understanding of standards as something living and in execution rather than a mandate or a doctrine on the “norm.” Understanding the types of standards, the history of standards, and the creation of the CCSS has helped me understand how I should use the CCSS in my discussion on education and my own teaching. I have been able to utilize the CCSS to help me develop a model of reading comprehension and a system for teaching and talking about reading.

APPENDIX A: List of Acronyms

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

Coined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Adequate Yearly Progress is the progress that every subgroup of a school must achieve on standardized state tests in order for the school to be considered proficient.

CCSS: Common Core State Standards

The national math and literacy standards that were released in 2010 by the National Governors Association and have since been voluntarily adopted by 48 states. These standards include standards for mathematics and literacy..

CCSSM: Common Core State Standards for Math

These are the Common Core Standards that were created specifically for math and include grade specific standards for K-12.

CCSSI: Common Core State Standards Initiative

The Common Core State Standards initiative refers to the organization that has made the effort to bring national education standards to the United States. It is spearheaded by The National Governor's Association as well as the Council Of State School Officers. The CCSSI created and disseminated the CCSS>

EPIC: Educational Policy Improvement Center

EPIC is a non-profit organization that researches education policy with a specially in career readiness in order to help improve the current educational climate.

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

This act was originally passed in 1965 by Lyndon B. Johnson. It established the federal governments involvement in public education as well as determines the funding that public schools will receive. It has been renewed every five years and now includes legislation on testing, accountability, and standards. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is included in ESEA.

NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

This is the largest national test in the United States that determines how much students know in each of the core subjects.

NCEE: National Commission on the Excellence of Education

This committee was formed in the early 1980s and included 18 members representing the education, private, and government sectors. It published a report in 1983 entitle "A Nation at Risk."

NCEST: National Council on Education Standards and Testing

This organization was formed in 1992 to review the state of national education.

In 1992, it released a set of opportunity to learn national standards after which the organization dissipated.

NCLB: No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

This was the reauthorization of ESEA in 2001 and included legislation on AYP, testing, proficiency, and title I schools.

NCTM: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

This is an organization of administrators, educators, teachers, and educational leaders that develops standards and materials for teaching high level mathematics well. It develops lesson plans and does research so that it can better disseminate information on teaching mathematics as well as support teachers.

PARCC: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers

PARCC is an organization that is developing a standardized test for the Common Core State Standards.

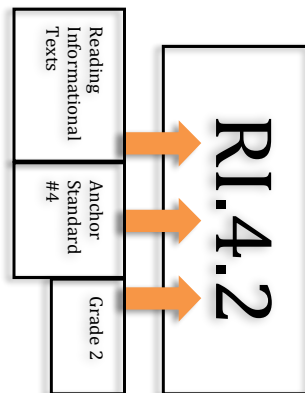
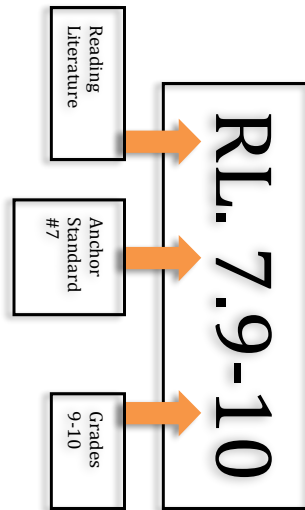
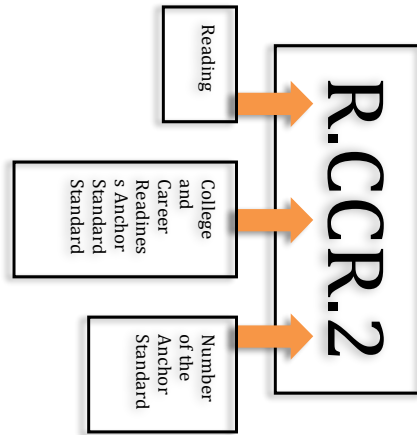
SW: Student will

SW is an acronym that many teachers use at the beginning of their daily lesson's objective.

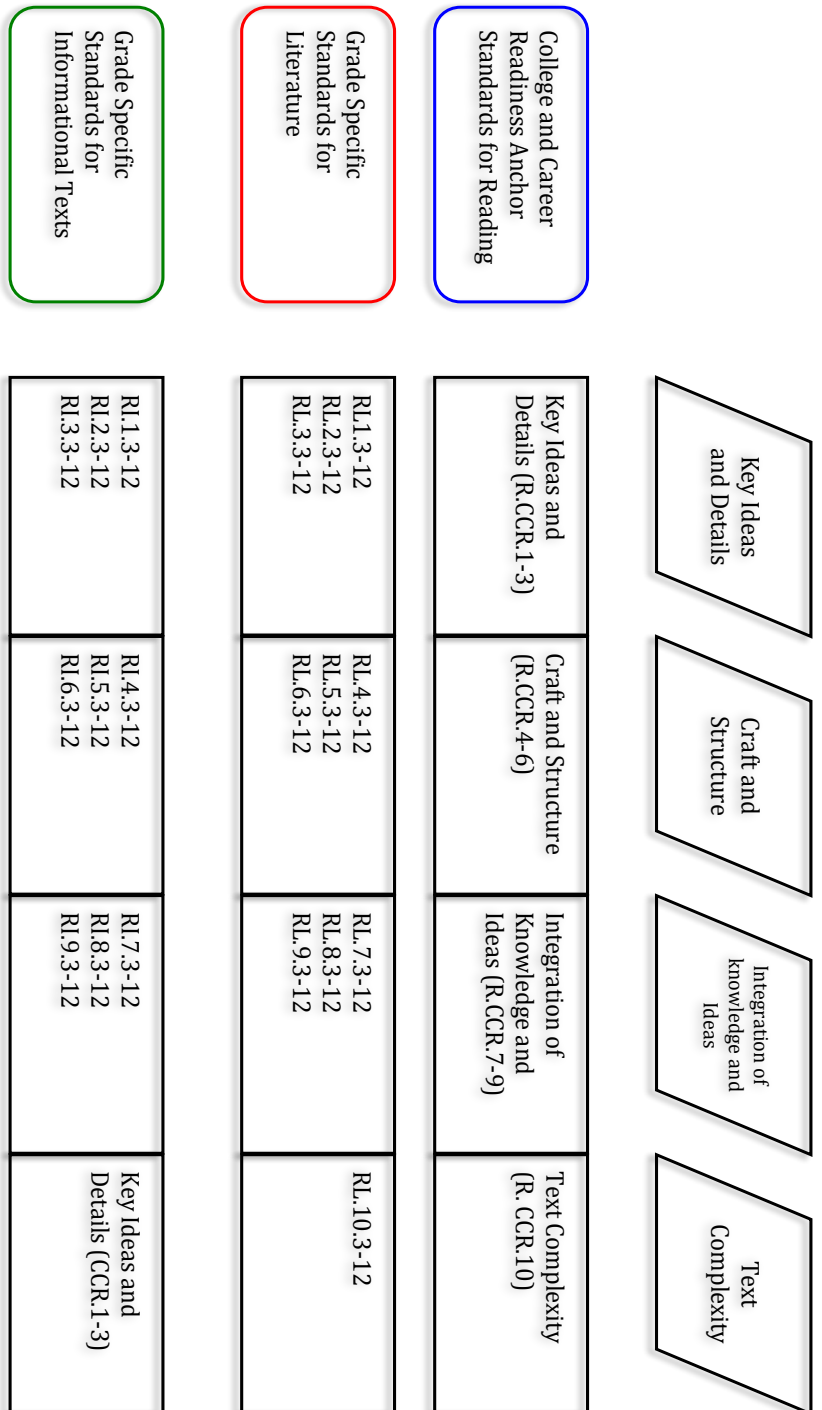
POV: Point of view

This is the point of view, or who is telling the story. It is an acronym that many English teachers use when they are teaching the concept.

APPENDIX B: How to Read CCSS Literature Citations



APPENDIX C: The Structure of the Common Core State Standards



Works Cited

- Adler, M. (1988). Great Books, Democracy, and Truth. *Educational Studies*, 19(3/4), 290.
- American Diploma Project. (2004). Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts.
- Ames, B. (2012, August 26). Common core = less is more. *Frederick News-Post, The (MD)*.
- Barton, P.E. (2009). National Education Standards: Getting Below the Surface. Education Week, Princeton, NJ: The Education Testing Services Policy Center.
- Barton, P. E. (2010). National Education Standards: To Be or Not to Be?. *Educational Leadership*, 67(7), 22-29.
- Bush, G. (1990). Address before a joint session of the Congress on the state of the union,
- Bush, G. W. Address before a joint session of the Congress on the state of the union, (January 20, 2004). *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush* (pp. 94-101). Retrieved from GPO Access database:
http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2004_presidential_documents&docid=pd26j04_txt_10.pdf
- Caldas, S. J., & Bankston III, C. L. (2005). FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. *Society*, 42(4), 49-53.
- Changing World Requires Balance of Academic and 21st Century Skills. (2012). *Education Week*, 31(35), 10-1
- Cheney, L. V. (1994, October 20). The end of history. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlassite/discussions261/cheney.html>
- Chingos, M., & Whitehurst, G. (2012, April 14). Choosing blindly: Instructional materials, teacher effectiveness, and the common core. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute.
- Cizek, G., (2010 Oct 28). Translating standards into assessments: the opportunities and challenges of a common core. Washington DC: The Brookings Institute.
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the

Council of Chief State School Officers.

Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for mathematics*. Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Conley, D., Drummond, K., Gonzalez, A., Seburn, M., Stout, O., & Rooseboom, J. (201, Oct 14). Lining Up: The Relationships between the Common Core State Standards and Five Sets of Comparison Standards. Eugene, Oregon: EPIC.

Croft, M., & Whitehurst, G. (2009, Oct 29). Faith in common standards not enough. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Dillon, S. (2010, June 02). States receive a reading list: new standards for education. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/03/education/03standards.html>

Eilers, L. H., & D'Amico, M. (2012). Essential Leadership Elements in Implementing Common Core State Standards. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 78(4), 46-50.

Fleming, N. (2011). Common Core Stacks Up Well Vs. Other Respected Standards. *Education Week*, 31(10), 6.

Foner, E. (2010). Twisting History in Texas. *Nation*, 290(13), 4-6.

Fuller, B. (2011, January 25). Understandable but wrong. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/07/21/who-will-benefit-from-national-education-standards/uniform-national-standards-are-not-equal>

Garfunkel, S., & Mumford, D. (2011, August 24). How do fix our math education. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/25/opinion/how-to-fix-our-math-education.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=common core standards&st=Search

Gewertz, C. (2012). Common Standards Bring Savings, Or Billions in Costs, Report Says. *Education Week*, 31(33), 13.

Goldstein, M. (2010, July 29). At-risk children will benefit. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/07/21/who-will-benefit-from-national-education-standards/why-us-standards-will-benefit-at-risk-children>

Green, J., & Education Commission of the States, D. O. (1987). The Next Wave. A Synopsis of Recent Education Reform Reports. Teaching in America: The Possible Renaissance: TR-87-1.

Good, C. J. (2010). A NATION AT RISK. *American Educational History Journal*,

37(1/2), 367-386.

Hekimoglu, S., & Sloan, M. (2005). A Compendium of Views on the NCTM Standards. *Mathematics Educator*, 15(1), 35-43.

Herbert, M. (2011). Education Groups Join Common Core Math Coalition. *District Administration*, 47(9), 25.

Hoff, D. J. (1997). Goals 2000 loses its way on standards. *Education Week*, 16(17), 1.

Johnson, L. B., The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (1965) Remarks by the president in state of union address. Washington, D.C.: Retrieved from <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650104.asp>

Johnson, L. B., The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (1965). Remarks in Johnson City, Texas, upon signing the Elementary and Secondary Education Bill. Texas: Retrieved from <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/650411.asp>

Kahlenburg, R. (2011, April 07). Common standards are helpful. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/07/21/who-will-benefit-from-national-education-standards/national-education-standards-are-helpful>

Levine, A. C. (1995). An overview of the standards movement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(June), 740-741.

Lewin, T. (2010, July 21). Many states adopt national standards for their schools. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/21/education/21standards.html?_r=1

Matthews, J. (2012, February 22). Why common core standards will fail. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/why-common-core-standards-will-fail/2012/02/21/gIQAdkzDUR_story.html

Meier, D. (2010). Are National Education Standards the Right Move?. *Educational Leadership*, 67(7), 23.

Moustafa, M. (2012). California's Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts: What's New, What's Not, and What's Missing. *California Reader*, 45(4), 7-14.

Rothman, R. (2012). A Common Core of Readiness. *Educational Leadership*, 69(7), 10-15.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION. (1983). *A Nation at Risk*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Council for Teaching Mathematics. (2012). NCTM Public Comments on the Common Core Standards for Mathematics. Retrieved from

<http://www.nctm.org/about/content.aspx?id=25186>.

New York State Department of Education. (2005). *English language arts core curriculum (prekindergarten–grade 12)*. Retrieved from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elacore.pdf>

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 1111 (2008).

Read more: How to Cite the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 in APA Style | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/how_10010700_cite-child-left-behind-act-2001-apa-style.html#ixzz26JgfD7JT

Porter, A., McMaken, J., Hwang, J., & Yang, J. (2010 Oct 28). Common core standards: the new US intended curriculum. Washing DC: The Brookings Institute.

Phillips, A. (2012, March 11). Nonfiction curriculum enhanced reading skills, study finds. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/12/nyregion/nonfiction-curriculum-enhanced-reading-skills-in-new-york-city-schools.html?pagewanted=print>

Ravitch, D. (1995). *National standards in american education*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great american school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York: Basic Books.

Richardson, C. J., & Eddy, C. M. (2011). THE MATHEMATICAL ARGUMENT. *American Educational History Journal*, 38(1/2), 277-288.

Sawchuk, S. (2012). Common Standards Present New Frontier for Teacher Learning. *Education Week*, 32(1), 4-6.

Scott, D. (2012, February 12). Two paths towards common core standards assessment. *Governing.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.governing.com/blogs/view/two-paths-toward-common-core-standards-assessments.html>

Shah, N. (2012, May 23). Creating a common core test for all. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/speced/2012/05/designing_common_core_tests_pr.html

Schmidt, W. (2010). Are National Education Standards the Right Move?. *Educational Leadership*, 67(7), 24.

Schmidt, W. (2012). Seizing the Moment for Mathematics. *Education Week*, 31(36), 24-25.

Southern Regional Education Board, A. A. (1988). Challenge 2000: Goals for Education.

Standard. (n.d.). In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.oed.com>

Stotsky, S. (2010, September 23). Equalizing mediocrity. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2010/7/21/who-will-benefit-from-national-education-standards/equalizing-mediocrity>

Tienken, C. H. (2010). Common Core State Standards: I Wonder?. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 47(1), 14-17.

The Paideia Proposal: A Symposium. (1983). *Harvard Educational Review*, 53(4), 377-379.

Vinovskis, M. A. (2009). From a nation at risk to no child left behind. New York City: Teachers College Press.

Watt, Michael G. (2011). "The Common Core State Standards Initiative: an Overview." Online SubmissionERIC, EBSCOhost (accessed February 4, 2012).

Williams, V. (2011, March 11). When 'best practices' mean 'average'. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/01/26/grading-the-education-president/when-best-practices-mean-average-performance-in-the-classroom>