Getting to the Core

The Common Core State Standards

(CCSS)

Course Outline

Course Description

You've heard of the Common Core State Standards. Chances are, your state has adopted them. How did they emerge? What do they cover? How are they organized? And most importantly, how do you implement the CCSS?

The CCSS, coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), were designed to prepare students for college and career readiness. At this point, they have been formally adopted by 45 states, 3 territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity.

This course will explore the Common Core State Standards. It will provide teachers with an understanding of the CCSS, but more importantly it will give them the strategies and tools necessary to create an educational framework to meet the needs of students, to help them achieve success, and be fully prepared for college and the workforce.

Objectives

- Develop working definitions for the Common Core State Standards
- Analyze the Reading Standards
- Examine Literal Understandings and Text Complexity
- Explore various ways to implement the CCSS for reading literature
- Explore various ways to implement the CCSS for reading informational texts
- Analyze the Writing Standards
- Examine the quality of writing expected
- Examine the writing process
- Examine writing across the disciplines
- Evaluate and create a plan to implement the CCSS
- Create a lesson plan that incorporates the CCSS
- Research current educational policies and research-based educational programs that puts into practice the CCSS
- Analyze how data can drive meaningful instruction

- Investigate the Speaking and Listening Standards
- Explore and evaluate improvement possibilities for teacher professional development and community building

Curriculum Design & Time Requirements

This is a sixty-hour, three credit graduate level course completed over a thirteen-week period. Modules One through Nine will be completed at a pace of one per week. Module Ten will be completed over a two-week period, allowing students the time to complete and revise final projects.

Getting to the Core will be presented systematically, by the instructor, using the Instructional Conversation method, in which there a conversation where ideas are explored and evaluated, rather than direct answers to teachers' provided test questions (Cazden 1988). Each concept will act as a foundation or building block to create a framework for understanding and implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Module One will define and explore the value of the Common Core State Standards. Modules Two, Three, Four, and Five will examine and analyze the Reading Standards, and evaluate they can be implemented in the classroom. In a similar way, Modules Six and Seven will examine, analyze, and evaluate the Writing Standards. Module Eight will explore the Speaking and Listening Standards, and Module Nine will investigate assessments and reforms. Finally, Module Ten ties it all together, through the development of a Lesson Plan, that encompasses all of the concepts presented in the course.

Hardware & Computer Skill Requirements

Students may use either a Macintosh computer or a PC with Windows 2000 or higher. Students should possess basic word processing skills and have internet access with an active e-mail account. Students also are expected to have a basic knowledge of how to use a Web browser, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, Safari, Mozilla Firefox etc.

Course Materials

The required text for this course is *Pathways to the Common Core,* by Lucy Calkins, Mary Ehrenworth, and Christopher Leham.

Session 1: Introduction to the Common Core State Standards
Contents:

1. List commonly heard negative ways of thinking about the CCSS
2. List valuable ways of thinking about the CCSS
3. Reflect upon what you are already doing in your classroom, and what the Common Core requires.
4. Reflect upon ways you can begin to bridge the gap

Session 2: The Reading Standards

1. Analyze the Reading Standards
2. Examine what the standards find significant in reading comprehension
3. Examine how the same skills are applied to reading literature and informational texts

Session 3: Literal Understanding and Text Complexity
Contents:

1. Analyze how the CCSS recommends finding a text's level of complexity
2. Examine how to get students reading increasing complex text
3. Explore how to support students who are reading below grade level

Session 4: Reading Literature: Standards 2-9
Contents:

1. Analyze a literature text, between the reading standards
2. Explore implementing the literature standards in your classroom

Session 5: Reading Informational Text: Standards 2-9
Content:

1. Analyze a informational text, between the reading standards
2. Explore implementing the informational standards in your classroom

Session 6: The Writing Standards
Contents:

1. Analyze the Writing Standards
2. Examine the types of text the standards call for, (narrative, argument, information)
3. Examine the quality of writing expected
4. Examine the writing process and writing across the disciplines

Session 7: Gaining a Greater Understanding of the Writing Standards
Contents:

1. Reflect upon the methods your school currently uses to teach writing
2. Evaluate how these methods align or conflict with the CCSS
3. Explore how you can bridge the gap, to support students' growth

Session 8: The Speaking and Listening Standards
Contents

1. Analyze the Speaking and Listening Standards
2. Explore the use of technology in the classroom
3. Examine how students should learn to use grammar and conventions
4. Examine different strategies for vocabulary development

Session 9: Assessments and Reform
Contents

1. Evaluate your thoughts from this course
2. Examine your "best practices" in your classroom
3. Explore how you can strengthen those practices, to align to the CCSS
4. Explore how you, and your colleagues, can continue to implement the CCSS

Session 10: Tying it All Together
Contents:
1. Complete Lesson Plan Project
2. Complete Personal Position Paper
3. Complete Student Survey

Grading

Assignment	Points	Grading Scale	
Forum Participation	31	165-155	A
Module Reflections	106	154-140	B
Lesson Plan Project	20	139-125	C
Position Paper	8		
Total Points	**165**		

Student Requirements

1. **Participation:** Participation in all Forum activities and dialogue with colleagues.
2. **Reading Assignments:** Students will complete all assigned reading in the modules, textbook, and assigned websites.
3. **Reflection Assignments:** Write a reflection as outlined in each module and send it in the body of an e-mail message to the instructor.
4. **Lesson Plan Project:** Complete a lesson plan, in your discipline or grade level, that is aligned with the CCSS .
5. **Position Paper:** Create a personal position paper on what we have learned from this course, that we should keep in mind when implementing the CCSS.

Student Academic Integrity

Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.

Register

To register to take TEI's Getting to the Core Online course, go to the **Course Registration** page.