Solution Tree | Press

Collaborating for Success With the Common Core: A Toolkit for Professional Learning Communities at Work™

By Kim Bailey; Chris Jakicic; Jeanne Spiller

_____

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Collaborating for Success With the Common Core: A Toolkit for Professional Learning Communities at Work™* by Kim Bailey, Chris Jakicic, and Jeanne Spiller. *Collaborating for Success With the Common Core* offers educators tips and strategies to successfully implement the Common Core State Standards in their school curriculum through teamwork. It is designed for school teams already familiar with and answering the questions of professional learning communities as well as those teams new to the PLC process.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or by an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

Chapter 1

Understanding the Common Core State Standards

_____

1. How can you use your professional learning community to empower the shift to Common Core State Standards?

2. What guiding questions should your collaborative team use to shape the team's inquiry and instructional practice? What approach must your collaborative team take to answer those questions?

3. Why do the Common Core standards provide a *staircase* framework of skills and concepts for success in school?

4. Identify the approaches professional learning teams can take to become familiar with the Common Core standards. Which approaches would be best for your team?

5. What are the components of an effective team? Which of these areas, if any, does your team need to strengthen? How can you strengthen them?

6. How can team leaders make the connection between CCSS and instruction, assessment, and intervention explicit to all team members?

Chapter 2

Supporting Change to Facilitate Shifts to the CCSS

_____

1. How can collaborative teams help teachers embrace the CCSS and its expectations?

2. How have the Common Core ELA standards changed teaching and learning expectations in English language arts? How have the Common Core mathematics standards changed the teaching and learning expectations in mathematics?

3. What is *second-order change*? How is it different than *first-order change*? What steps can collaborative teams take to implement it?

4. What implications does the shift to CCSS have for professional development? Have any of these changes been felt in your team's PD? How can you meet these implications?

5. How can you ensure that your PLC continues to support the concept of continuous improvement and team learning while adopting the CCSS?

6. What suggestions do the authors offer for new PLC teams that are also transitioning to the CCSS?

Chapter 3

Powering the CCSS

_____

1. What are *power standards* and how do you determine which CCSS standards fall into that category? What are the implications of powering the CCSS?

2. How can teams prevent teachers from being faced with *curriculum chaos*?

3. What are the characteristics of a guaranteed and viable curriculum? Does your school have these traits? If not, what improvements can be made?

4. The authors state, "It is critical to understand that powering is not about identifying which standards teachers will teach and which standards they will not" (p. 102). What purpose does powering standards serve?

5. What are the steps of the powering process? What should teams do first—power the standards or unwrap them?

6. What suggestions do the authors provide for teams new to the PLC process and for principals and leaders who are in the process of powering standards?

Chapter 4

Unwrapping the CCSS

_____

1. Does your team have a shared definition of the standards and its implications? What can your team do to create a common understanding of the standards?

2. What generalizations do teams make while trying to unwrap the CCSS? Have you run into any while unwrapping the CCSS, and how can you overcome them?

3. What role do *learning targets* play in the unwrapping process? Describe the process for identifying learning targets in each standard.

4. How can teams determine which standards will be addressed as clusters throughout a particular unit or distributed across several units of study? Why is joint unit planning critical to the unwrapping process?

5. "As teams become more comfortable with the process for unwrapping standards they may want to 'raise the bar' and set the stage for designing quality instruction and assessment" (p. 159). Why is it important to take a leveled approach to unwrapping the standards? What is the process of *leveling the learning targets*?

6. While identifying learning targets, teams will naturally begin to brainstorm potential assessments. How can teams identify the best assessments for each learning target?

Chapter 5

Scaling Learning Targets to Define Proficiency

_____

1. Why is the scaling process unique from unwrapping the Common Core standards? What is the link between proficiency scales and standards-based reporting?

2. How do you determine whether your team is ready for the scaling process?

3. How can leaders illustrate the need for proficiency scales and learning targets?

4. Why is grading in a scaled system more precise and accurate? What are the advantages of grading in this way?

5. How can teams new to the PLC process get a feel for how the proficiency scale process works?

6. What questions should principals and team leaders ask themselves while defining proficiency? How do your principal and leaders answer them?

Chapter 6

Determining Pacing and Unit Design

_____

1. What are pacing guides? What are common misconceptions about pacing guides?

2. How does pacing help teams create a common understanding of important concepts and skills? What are the additional benefits of pacing guides?

3. Why should teachers work together to create pacing guides?

4. Developing pacing guides can be accomplished in a variety of ways. What steps do the authors outline in this chapter?

5. What challenges will teams new to the PLC process experience while trying to develop pacing guides? How can they be overcome?

6. How can principals and other PLC leaders direct their teams' development of pacing guides?

Chapter 7
Defining Rigor and Assessment Practices

_____

1. What is summative assessment? What factors should your team keep in mind when determining the best summative assessment practices to evaluate Common Core standards?

2. What is formative assessment? What factors should your team keep in mind when determining the best formative assessment practices to evaluate Common Core standards?

3. In what way do the CCSS require higher-level reasoning? What assessments can you administer to evaluate learner reasoning?

4. With the CCSS, how many learning targets do the authors recommend using with common formative assessments? Why? How should data be collected from common formative assessments?

5. Teams may also choose to use summative assessments to evaluate students' learning. What are some summative assessments teachers can use?

6. How can teams new to the PLC process concurrently operate within the PLC model while defining rigor and outlining assessments? How can principals and other leaders support the process?

Chapter 8

Using Rubrics to Provide Feedback

_____

1. What is the purpose of rubrics? What value do they hold for providing feedback?

2. What types of rubrics do the authors list? When is it appropriate to use each?

3. How can rubrics be created and used for scaled assessment?

4. How should teams new to the PLC process approach rubrics as a feedback tool?

5. "Probably the most difficult aspect for teams who will use rubrics in their assessments is making sure that each member applies the rubric in the same way" (p. 290). What can principals and leaders do to help teams in this process?

Chapter 9

Using Quality Instructional Practices

_____

1. What is the difference between lesson planning and learning planning?

2. What implications for instructional design does the shift to CCSS have? What are the elements of quality instructional practices for implementing the CCSS?

3. How do the authors define rigor and relevance in regard to their place within the CCSS?

4. Why should teams intentionally focus on strategies that integrate the four Cs and the CCSS?

5. What new challenges will the CCSS present to students? How can teachers use scaffolding to support students as they face these challenges? What questions should teams ask themselves as they use scaffolding?

6. How can you keep your instructional design practices relevant to the CCSS and students' learning? What questions should your team ask throughout the process?

Chapter 10

Responding When Students Need More Time and Support

_____

1. How can teams create time for response during the day?

2. Why do the authors use the term *corrective instruction* rather than intervention to highlight the response needed for quality core instruction?

3. What considerations must be taken into account when designing responses to students who have not learned a target the first time?

4. How can your team capitalize on both the art and science of their work to develop corrective instruction?

5. How can your team use scales to build assessments? How can you develop hypotheses that support those efforts?

6. How should teams decide the best response strategy when a student fails to meet a learning target?

7. What tips do the authors offer PLC leaders and teams new to the process to respond to

students who need more support?

Chapter 11

Responding When Students Are Proficient

_____

1. What do teams need to think about related to using the information from learning target-aligned assessments to extend and enrich learning for students who already know the essential learning?

2. Why should preassessments be performed before instruction? What are three ways teams should approach preassessments? What is the benefit of each?

3. How can teams use scaled learning targets to provide even more focused enrichment and extension for students who already know the content and those who are not quite at expected proficiency?

4. What steps should teams take to think differently about time, student groups, and instructional strategies?

5. What tips do the authors offer for teams new to the PLC process and for PLC leaders who are meeting the needs of students already proficient in meeting the learning targets?