Do not pass Go! Do not collect $200!

Stop! Before you do any more work on Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) implementation, make sure that your staff first understands the six shifts that have to occur prior to any CCLS work. The shifts have to be understood before any other CCLS work because it is the only way that the CCLS has any chance of making a significant difference in our schools and classrooms.

A close analysis of the six shifts (the shifts for ELA are detailed in this edition of NTnews) indicates that some profound and significant changes are necessary in our curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Most significantly, we have to rethink the balance between fiction and nonfiction we ask our students to read and write because we have to rethink our orientation toward our students’ future and away from the adults’ past. Our obligation (and purpose for existing as an institution) is to prepare young people for their future. A consideration of their future indicates a paramount need for skilled interaction with informational (nonfiction) text. Adults, especially in their work, but also in their personal lives, interact with far more nonfiction than fiction. Of course, fiction provides a great richness and pleasure to our lives. Nonfiction, however, occupies all of our work and a good portion of our personal lives, too. As a result, we have to shift the balance of fiction and nonfiction in our schools.

Our primary classrooms have to use more nonfiction informational texts as students learn to read. As students grow older, informational text must be more prominent in intermediate classrooms as students make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. At the secondary level, students must write and closely read authentic texts in each and every content area. This does not include textbooks – they are not particularly authentic. Secondary teachers will have to identify the authentic texts of their discipline and use these in their classroom, teaching students how to read, write, speak, listen, etc. in their content area. If secondary teachers do this, students will learn the material more deeply and permanently as well as be better readers and writers.

These shifts are foundational; the shifts have to occur in order for any subsequent curriculum and assessment work to be productive and meaningful. Stop! Before going any further with curriculum and assessment you have to make these shifts. Then, and only then, can you pass Go!
Six Instructional Shifts for the CCLS in ELA & Literacy:
A brief examination of the shifts and key instructional implications

**Shift 1**
**PK-5, Balancing Informational & Literary Texts**
◊ Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts. Elementary school classrooms are, therefore, places where students access the world – science, social studies, the arts and literature – through text. At least 50% of what students read is informational.

**Instructional Take-Away(s)**
◊ Educators will need to examine current materials to determine whether or not sufficient resources exist for them to meet the demands of increased teaching with and learning from informational texts. Additionally, educators should determine appropriate strategies to engage students in non-fiction text as well as strategies to harness the power of the text features inherent to this genre.

**Shift 2**
**6-12, Knowledge in the Disciplines**
◊ Content area teachers outside of the ELA classroom emphasize literacy experiences in their planning and instruction. Students learn through domain-specific texts in science and social studies classrooms – rather than referring to the text, they are expected to learn from what they read.

**Instructional Take-Away(s)**
◊ A shared responsibility for rigorous literacy instruction across all content areas is no longer a goal, but a reality with the purposeful placement of standards for content reading and writing embedded alongside the ELA standards. The exposure to and analysis of sophisticated non-fiction text within specific domains will create authentic reading tasks leading students to develop deeper understandings of key concepts.

**Shift 3**
**Staircase of Complexity**
◊ In order to prepare students for the complexity of college and career ready texts, each grade level requires a “step” of growth on the “staircase”. Students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered. Teachers are patient, create more time and space in the curriculum for this close and careful reading, and provide appropriate and necessary scaffolding and supports so that it is possible for students reading below grade level.

**Instructional Take-Away(s)**
◊ Educators will need to consider the current level of text being consumed by students in relation to the text samples compiled in Appendix B of the CCLS. Although not to be construed as a required reading list, these texts represent the types of texts and levels of text complexity students would be expected to read in order to be college and career ready.
Shift 4
Text-based Answers
◊ Students have rich and rigorous conversations which are dependent on a common text. Teachers insist that classroom experiences stay deeply connected to the text on the page and that students develop habits for making evidentiary arguments both in conversation, as well as in writing, to assess comprehension of a text.

Instructional Take-Away(s)
◊ Quality, thoughtful questions require purposeful planning and consideration for where they will lead students in their learning. Text-dependent questions by nature will require students to make multiple forays into the text, examining specific passages, sentences, and words, driving the need for close reading to determine what the author is expressing or is not.

Shift 5
Writing from Sources
◊ Writing needs to emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument rather than the personal narrative and other forms of decontextualized prompts. While the narrative still has an important role, students develop skills through written arguments that respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments presented in the texts they read.

Instructional Take-Away(s)
◊ Across the disciplines, students must be able to write to inform as well as construct sound arguments using multiple sources, relevant evidence, and balanced analysis of opposing viewpoints. Writing tasks should range from short, on-demand prompts to longer, research-type writing assignments.

Shift 6
Academic Vocabulary
◊ Students constantly build the vocabulary they need to access grade level complex texts. By focusing strategically on comprehension of pivotal and commonly found words (such as “discourse,” “generation,” “theory,” and “principled”) and less on esoteric literary terms (such as “onomatopoeia” or “homonym”), teachers constantly build students’ ability to access more complex texts across the content areas.

Instructional Take-Away(s)
◊ Educators must increase the direct instruction of Tier 2 words* to provide students with the necessary vocabulary to engage successfully with complex, grade level text. Such words generally are not well-defined by context, nor confined to a specific content area, but rather have applicability to a wide range of reading situations.

(*For more information on Tier 2 words, see Isabel Beck’s Bringing Words to Life.)

SIX SHIFTS IN ELA
1. Balancing Informational & Literary Texts
2. Building Knowledge in the Disciplines
3. Staircase of Complexity
4. Text-based Answers
5. Writing from Sources
6. Academic Vocabulary

Look for in the next issue:
SIX SHIFTS IN MATH
1. Focus
2. Coherence
3. Fluency
4. Deep Understanding
5. Applications
6. Dual Intensity
## Evaluator Training

### Lead Evaluator:
1. Nov 7 or 8
2. Jan 10 or 13
3. Feb 6 or 8
4. Mar 13 or 20
5. June 4 or 5

### Principal Evaluator:
1. Nov 21
2. Dec 21 (and 3-8 principals)
3. Feb 9 or 15
4. Mar 8 or 21
5. April 25 or 26
6. June 6 or 14

## Race To The Top Professional Development

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<td>1. <strong>Prioritizing the Standards</strong> – Cortland (Network Team)</td>
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<td>4. <strong>Responsive Classroom Sampler</strong> (CI&amp;A)</td>
<td>2. <strong>Responsive Classroom: Ideas to Boost Your Morning Meetings &amp; Classroom Engagement</strong> (CI&amp;A)</td>
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<td>14. <strong>Data Driven Team Session</strong> (Network Team)</td>
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Go to [register.ocmboces.org](http://register.ocmboces.org) to sign up for any workshop.

The [Leadership and Learning Center](http://www.leadandlearn.com/conferences-events/new-york-boces-summit) is holding a summit in Syracuse on November 15 & 16 — the first of its kind in the country! Network team districts have received two complimentary seats to this event that will focus on the Common Core and Data-Driven Instruction. To learn more, go to: [http://www.leadandlearn.com/conferences-events/new-york-boces-summit](http://www.leadandlearn.com/conferences-events/new-york-boces-summit)