

## Module 1:

Instructional Implications of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.  
Session 2: Informational Text, Grades 6–12 Content Area Teachers



### Session Description

Participants will examine the 6-12 grade-specific Reading Informational Text Standards of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

### Expected Outcomes

- Become familiar with the 6-12 CCSS Reading Informational Text Standards in History/Social Studies OR Science and Technical Subjects
- Identify standards that may be new or represent a new emphasis or level of rigor for Oregon teachers.
- Become aware of relevant resources in the ODE document *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core*.

### Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)
- CCSS Reading Informational Text Standards ( 25 minutes)
  - Partner activity – Progression of difficulty
  - Partner activity – What's new?
  - Partner activity– What is 'evidence'?
- Resources from *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core* and the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* (5 minutes)
- Reflection (10 minutes)
  - Partner activity – How did we do?
  - What's next?
  - Reflection

### Time

- 45 minutes

### Audience

- Designed to be used with groups of 6-12 leaders and teachers of social studies, science, and technical subjects working with grade-level partners.

### Materials

- Handout copy of PowerPoint slides (suggested 6 slides per page)
- Handout Reading Informational Text Standards 6-12 in the appropriate subjects (both provided with this session)
- Handout Reflections Module 1, Session 2 ELA & Literacy (provided with this session)

### Resources/References

- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects  
[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI\\_ELA%20Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)
- *Oregon Literacy Plan—K-12*, *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core*  
<http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/elarts/reading/literacy/have-you-ever.pdf>

- [Oregon Literacy Plan—K-12, Chapter 3: Instruction, Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework](http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/elarts/reading/literacy/chapter-3-instruction.pdf)  
<http://www.ode.state.or.us/teachlearn/subjects/elarts/reading/literacy/chapter-3-instruction.pdf>

### **Slide 1**

**Welcome** participants, and introduce the subject for today.

**Suggest** that participants sit with one or more partners who teach the same subjects and grade levels(s).

**Check** to see that everyone has the materials: Copy of the PowerPoint slides; Handout CCSS Reading Informational Text Standards History/Social Studies OR Science & Technical Subjects; Reflections

**Explain** that one of the instructional implications of implementing the CCSS will be an increased emphasis on teaching students to read complex informational text from the content areas.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Preparing students to be college and career ready by graduation will mean an increased emphasis on teaching students to understand and interact with informational text in the disciplines. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content. Postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in secondary schools, while at the same time providing comparatively little scaffolding.

At the secondary level, this will mean a coordinated effort across content areas. In the content area classroom, this will mean an increased emphasis on teaching students to read informational text from the specific disciplines independently and proficiently.”

### **Slide 2**

**Go over** the expected outcomes for this session.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Today we will take a look at the 10 Informational Text Reading Standards in the content areas, looking a bit more closely at some that may be less familiar, either because they have not been specifically included in Oregon’s content area standards or because they now represent higher levels of rigor or independence at given grades than we have expected of students in the past.

Also, remembering that the Standards depict WHAT students should know and be able to do, we want to highlight some of the relevant resources in the *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core* document on the ODE website. This chapter includes specific suggestions on HOW to support our students in successfully reaching these standards within the disciplines. This document is the ‘bridge’ between the CCSS and the very comprehensive *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework*, also accessible on the ODE website.”

### **Slide 3**

**Explain** that the literacy standards in the content area do not replace content standards nor specify required texts. They reflect the need for students to be able to learn content by reading with little scaffolding or support.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“The Standards set requirements for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, recognizing that students must learn to read and write effectively in a variety of content areas. The Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines. Literacy standards for grade 6 and above are predicated on teachers of ELA, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects using their content area expertise to help students meet the particular challenges of reading and writing in their respective fields. It is important to note that the 6–12 literacy standards in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are not meant to replace content standards in those areas but rather to supplement them.

Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K–12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding.”

#### **Slide 4**

**Explain** that the National Assessment of Educational Progress has taken the lead in assigning relative weight to literary and informative text. At the elementary levels, it calls for a balance of literary and informational text, increasing the proportion of informational text as students advance through the grades.

#### **For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, given every two years, uses a balance of literary and informational text at the elementary level, with a growing emphasis on informational text thereafter.

This means is that by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 70% of the reading instructional time, as well as instructional materials, will be devoted to informational text. This includes instruction that occurs within social studies, science, and technical subjects as well as English language arts.”

#### **Slide 5**

**Explain** that the 6-12 grade standards follow NAEP in calling for an equal proportion of text drawn from science/technical subjects, history/social studies, and literary sources.

#### **For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“One of the most significant instructional impacts of the CCSS is the increase in the quantity of literacy materials and amount of instructional time devoted to informational text. Seventy percent of the reading instruction 6-12 students receive across their instructional day (in social studies, science and other subjects, as well as ELA) will be devoted to informational text.

In following NAEP, the standards call for about one-third of the text from each of three areas: social studies, science, and literary.

In social studies, that includes both primary and secondary sources. In science and technical subjects, it includes journal articles and quantitative information presented in different formats (formulas, charts). In English language arts, that includes literary nonfiction with an emphasis on foundational U.S. documents.

By the secondary level, most of the informational text students experience will be discipline-specific text in the content areas. This is also the text that will be similar to the type of material they will experience in college and career training situations. The goal is for students to be able to learn content through the text they read.”

### **Slide 6**

**Explain** that research has shown that both content-area and disciplinary literacy are important for students to learn, and readers need to learn and apply the language of each discipline.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“We have two areas of research to draw from, termed *content area literacy* and *disciplinary literacy*.

You may recognize phrases from content area literacy such as “reading across the curriculum” and “all teachers are teachers of reading.” This approach emphasizes generic comprehension strategies that are usefully applied to informational text on a wide variety of subjects. These are generalizable routines such as anticipation guides, guided note taking, questioning routines such as KWL, etc. They are intended to be taught by reading and content teachers alike, but in reality may be far more familiar to reading teachers than to content area teachers.

The more recent research area focuses on disciplinary literacy, the specialized ways of learning and communicating the different disciplines. For example, chemistry reading requires a full understanding of experiments and processes, the ability to make connections among and between connected text, formulas, graphs, and charts. Historians approach informational text by considering the author’s perspective, contextualizing the text within its historical period and place, corroborating information across sources. Only teachers trained in the specific disciplines are in a position to use the best of both approaches.”

### **Slide 7**

**Explain** that in addition to the need for students to read college and career level text by the time they graduate, informational text increases students’ access to text that will help them increase their vocabularies, general knowledge, language and reasoning abilities.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Including more informational text is important for several reasons.

One, as we’ve already mentioned, is that to be college and career ready, all students must be able to deal independently with challenging informational text when they graduate – to be able to learn from the text independently. In order to reach that goal by graduation, students need to learn to read increasingly complex text through the grades.

Other reasons for the emphasis are that by developing deep comprehension of high quality informational text, students build language and vocabulary, build knowledge of the world and the disciplines, build reasoning ability, and learn to have those active ‘conversations’ with texts that mark mature, proficient readers.”

### **Slide 8**

**Direct** participants’ attention to the Handout “CCSS Reading Informational Text Standards ...” in their content area and suggest that they work with partners who teach the same subjects and grade bands.

**Note** that on the handout the standards requiring multiple texts have been set off with additional borders.

**Explain** that the standards represent a continuum of proficiency from a very beginning level at K to the college and career readiness level depicted in the CCR Anchor Standards. Remind participants that each step up in task difficulty defined by the Standards is matched by a “step up” in text complexity not reflected in the individual grade-level standards themselves. Text complexity will be addressed in a subsequent session.

**Invite** participants to work with partners to identify the ‘step up’ in task difficulty at each grade for several standards.

**Allow** about 5 minutes for partners to work.

**Invite** participants to report out on some of particular interest to them.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Let’s take a look at the Handout ‘CCSS Reading Informational Text Standards’ in your content area. This document has been set up to show the progression for each of the 10 standards. Those standards requiring multiple texts have been set off with additional borders since they may necessitate some extra planning effort in identifying suitable texts and materials.

The Standards, as we have seen, are arranged around a framework of the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards and have been written using a ‘back-mapping’ strategy, identifying where students need to be on the learning progression by the end of each grade in order to make the end-point attainable. So, the standards at each subsequent grade level incorporate a ‘step up’ in task difficulty (as well as the ‘step up’ in the complexity of the texts).

With your partner(s), examine several of these 6/8 -11/12 progressions to identify how the tasks become more difficult at each grade.”

### **Slide 9**

**Draw** participants’ attention to the distinctions that raise the level of rigor from one grade band to the next in Standard 9.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Let’s look at how the standards ‘step up’ the level of task difficulty from grade to grade in Standard 9 first. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade standard for reading informational text is presented here so you can see the step up to the 6-8 grade band.

Each of these represents quite substantial ‘steps up’ in rigor and cognitive demand.

Were the ‘steps up’ in Standard 9 for science and technical subjects similarly clear and rigorous?”

### **Slide 10**

**Invite** participants to discuss with their partners what counts as “evidence” among disciplines.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“One of the important distinctions among the disciplines is what counts as evidence. The CCR Anchor Standard reflects the requirement that in order to be college and career ready, students need to be able to evaluate arguments in terms of the evidence. Here we see the standard translated into the content areas. What evidence would we expect graduating students to bring to their evaluation in each area?

Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts, considering a wider range of textual evidence, and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts.

With your partners, take a few minutes to think about what students might come to encounter as ‘evidence’ in the various content areas. We’ll take a few minutes to share some.”

### **Slide 11**

**Invite** partners to look closely at the Reading Informational Text standards at their own grade level(s) and identify elements that match present practice and elements that are a new emphasis or represent a higher level of rigor.

**Allow** 5-10 minutes for group work.

**Invite** participants to share what they found and ideas they have about instructional approaches.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“With partners or in small groups, read through the continuum for several of the standards and think about current classroom practice at your grade level(s).”

Identify standards that match present practice and identify one or two instructional strategies or classroom practices you have used that have helped students be successful.

Then, identify those standards that represent new content, new emphases, or a new level of rigor at your grade level(s). *[Allow time to work and report out some examples.]*

Since all students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered, appropriate scaffolding and supports will be necessary for students reading below grade level. Let’s take a look at ideas for scaffolding instruction from the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework*.”

### **Slide 12**

**Explain** that the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* presents strategies for instruction and assessment to ensure that students who are at risk of not meeting the grade-level expectations will be able to meet them, and that students who are reading at grade level or above will continue to make commensurate progress.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“The *Framework*, adopted by the State Board in 2009, features a comprehensive approach to reading using a differentiated instructional model, **Response to Intervention (RTI)**, based on student data. In addition to guidance on setting reading goals, assessing, leadership, and professional development, the *Framework* includes a lengthy chapter (Chapter 3: Instruction) which includes specific strategies and resources for providing explicit comprehension and vocabulary instruction and utilizing effective teacher delivery.

An inevitable question may be “How do I work more content into a year?” The expectation is that strategies that support students in learning to read text in the content areas help students learn the disciplinary content at the same time.

Let’s look at some of these classroom practices.”

### **Slide 13**

**Explain** that the ODE document *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core* provides a bridge between the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* and the *Common Core State Standards*. This is a sampling of the “classroom snapshots” in the former document.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“The ODE document *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core* provides a bridge between the *Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework* and the *Common Core State Standards*.

One of the extensive and specific resources in the *K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core* document is a series of ‘classroom snapshots.’ Here is a sampling of what the visitor would see. The

document includes graphic organizers for various grade levels and text types and several sets of ‘core questions’ for various subjects for students and teachers to ask, and so forth.

So, for instance, in supporting students in analyzing the structure of informational texts (Standard 5), we might see lists of words that function as transition or signal words for particular text structures; advance organizers tailored to the structure of the specific informational text; note-taking organizers for students to use as they read; and prompt sheets that focus students’ attention and ask them to reflect on the function of particular sentences or paragraphs after reading the text.”

#### **Slide 14**

**Explain** that this is a sampling of the ‘classroom snapshot’ depicting what a visitor would hear in a classroom teaching informational text.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Here is a sampling of what the classroom visitor might hear. Note the important role that teacher modeling – ‘thinking out loud’ – plays in reading instruction.

For instance, we might hear the teacher modeling how to summarize a piece of informational text (Standard 2), or modeling reasoning used to evaluate the specific claims in an argument (Standard 8).”

#### **Slide 15**

**Explain** that in addition to generalizable comprehension strategies, the Oregon Literacy Plan resources also include discussion and examples of disciplinary literacy instruction.

**Invite** participants to add to the list from their classroom experiences.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“Here are a few examples of disciplinary literacy strategies a teacher might use to help students learn to access text in science and technical subjects. In many cases, the only ‘new’ part for content area teachers may be the explicit instruction, teacher modeling, or guided practice of these reading skills.

These examples are among many in the document K-12 Teacher: Building Comprehension in the Common Core.”

#### **Slide 16**

**Explain** that these are more examples drawn from the K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“In helping students approach a specific challenging text in social studies, for instance, here are some discipline specific skills a teacher might select to focus on. The goals are ambitious: For students to ‘read like historians, economists, geographers, etc.’ -- to develop mature language and reasoning abilities and conceptual knowledge.”

#### **Slide 17**

**Invite** participants to turn to their partners and give short answers to the questions.

**For instance, the facilitator might say,**

“So how did we do? Our goals for today were 1) to become more familiar with the CCSS Reading Informational Text standards, 2) identify some of the standards that are new (or new in emphasis or level of rigor) at our grade level, and 3) become aware of some of the resources on the ODE website.

Let's practice a little active learning for a minute or two. Please you turn to your partner and recall a few details from the session as you discuss these questions. We know they are more likely to stay with us that way."

**Slide 18**

**Suggest** the activities listed as possible follow-ups to this session.

**Invite** participants to fill out the Reflections page.