

Top 10 FAQs on Elementary Units of Study

1) Q. Why did we introduce the units of study at different times?

A. The staggered start was planned to allow the CLAS teachers and site administration the opportunity to provide individual grade levels personalized support. For example, with the staggered start beginning with just second and third grade, that group of teachers can receive a higher level of support than if the entire school began implementation at the same time

2) Q. What parts of OCR are the unit of study intended to replace?

A. The unit of study uses current OCR stories and informational text from either social studies or science. The unit of study will replace the red section and the majority of the blue section and should take between 60-90 minutes a day. The remaining 60-90 minutes of the ELA block can be used to address the green section. Writing is explicitly addressed in the unit. If a teacher feels it is necessary, both the English Language Conventions and Word Analysis of the blue section can be embedded in the context of either the green section or the unit of study. Teachers should continue to teach systematic ELD to their English Learners.

3) Q. Will the units of study affect benchmark scores?

A. The first benchmark assesses the first 10 weeks of instruction, eight of which were taught prior to the implementation of the second and third grade unit of study. Due to the fact that the Common Core asks students to apply their learning and knowledge at a deeper level, the students should show more progress towards learning goals. Therefore, we anticipate that students will demonstrate a higher level of performance on the benchmark.

4) Q. Why is TK- Grade 3 implementing units of study in ELA and Grades 4-5 in mathematics?

A. Due to the emphasis on reading by third grade and the significant instructional shifts in literacy, TK- Grade 3 will focus on English Language Arts for this school year. Due to our focus on successful algebra completion in 8th or 9th grade and the need to build strong conceptual understanding and fluent procedural knowledge in mathematics, grades 4-5 will focus on mathematics this year.

5) Q. Why is the introduction to the Grades 4-5 unit of study different than TK-Grade 3?

A. The CLAS teachers have spent the majority of their time working on the ELA instructional shifts. To support effective implementation, selected CLAS teachers, expert classroom teachers, and our math curriculum specialist will be providing the training for the 4th and 5th grade teachers. To build teachers' knowledge base on the CCSS Mathematical Practices and teaching of conceptual understanding, the teachers will be provided a full day training. The first two hours will provide teachers with training on CCSS Mathematical Practices and the progression of math standards in the Common Core. The remainder of the day will provide specific training on the unit of study. Site administrators, at their discretion, are welcome to come to the entire day of training or any portion of the day that they feel is relevant to them.

6) Q. How long do the units of study take to teach?

A. The units are approximately 3 weeks long; however, this does not include the “Preparing the Learner” lessons, which may take up to a week, if necessary, depending on student needs and prerequisite skills. Teachers may extend past the time identified in the pacing guide or use additional time during their social studies or science instructional block to complete the unit of study. Again, Common Core asks students to apply their learning and knowledge at a deeper level and the students should show more progress towards learning goals during the units of study.

7) Q. What about combo classes?

A. The combo class should do the grade level appropriate for the composition of the class; however, it is always preferable to implement the higher-grade level unit. If students are regrouped for Open Court instruction, that practice should continue through the units of study.

8) Q. Can GATE teachers use the Depth and Complexity Icons along with the unit of study?

A. Yes, GATE teachers should certainly integrate their depth and complexity icons and content imperatives. They would need to decide when it is most appropriate as they do now with current curriculum.

9) Q. Is it appropriate to make modifications and accommodations for special education students in the units of study?

A. Special Education teachers should use the “Preparing the Learner” lessons and suggested scaffolds for special needs students. However, accommodations and modifications may be used if appropriate and required by a student’s IEP.

10) Q. How does the site request other specialized training found within the units of study (Thinking Maps, GLAD, etc.)?

A. The site administrator should contact Dr. Rodriguez with the request.