

## **Top 10 FAQs on K-12 Implementation of Common Core**

### **1) Q. How many units of study will the teachers be implementing during the 2013-2014 school year?**

A. All elementary teachers will be implementing three units of study during the 2013-2014 school year. The three units will include the two units of study that they implemented during the 2012-2013 school year (modified based on teacher feedback) and the unit of study that the writing teams will develop for the 2013-2014 school year. All intermediate and high school teachers, in the identified courses, will be implementing two units of study which includes the unit of study they implemented after the CST and the additional unit of study that the writing team will develop this summer or at the beginning of the school year. In addition, some courses such as 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Science, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Science, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science, and Chemistry will implement one unit of study, which will be developed by the summer writing teams.

### **2) Q. Will all teachers be expected to write Common Core units of study like the ones being developed by the writing teams?**

A. No, teachers on the writing teams are provided additional professional development to ensure the ability to write units of study that are consistent with our theoretical framework and our identified instructional shifts. There will be additional opportunities for teachers to be part of the unit of study process during the 2013-2014 school year.

### **3) Q. The writing teams are being trained on Quality Teacher for English Learner (QTEL) principles and strategies. Will all of the teachers be trained on QTEL?**

A. Yes, all K-12 teachers will use QTEL strategies embedded throughout the units of study. In addition, specific strategies will be included in future unit of study trainings and professional development modules so that teachers understand how the QTEL principles and strategies assist us in effectively implementing the Common Core rather than viewing it as a separate initiative. The most important aspect of QTEL is the foundational principles, which are embedded, in Santa Ana's established English Learner Theoretical Framework. QTEL is a pedagogical stance on how to maintain high expectations for English Learners while ensuring access to rigorous instruction through high levels of support and scaffolds.

### **4) Q. How do QTEL strategies support the instructional shifts such as the close read of complex text?**

A. QTEL principles and corresponding strategies support and provide scaffolds to ensure students can access complex text and rigorous instruction. We know that simply selecting hard texts and telling students to read them will not work. Students need to be taught how to read and think about complex texts. Students will have to understand what the author says and be able to defend their opinions and ideas with evidence from the text. Therefore, in the units of study, you will see the three moments of the lessons, adopted through QTEL, including Preparing the Learner, Interacting with the Text/Concept, and Extending the Learning that allow students to engage in this complex work. During these three moments, students are asked to re-read (Viewing with a Focus, Do/Say Chart), annotate the text, notice things that are confusing, discuss the text with others (Dyad Share, Jigsaw Reading) and respond to text-dependent questions.

### **5) Q. Can teachers start creating units on their own integrating their textbooks in ELA, History, Science and Math?**

A. The unit of study writing process is a very complex and iterative process that takes weeks to develop. Each unit of study moves through an evaluative process based on our established rubric and is reviewed by our national partners to ensure the production of high quality materials. Due to the complexity of this process, we are forming grade level/course alike teams of enthusiastic teachers that will work together to create our units of study.

**6) Q. Are assessments included in the units of study?**

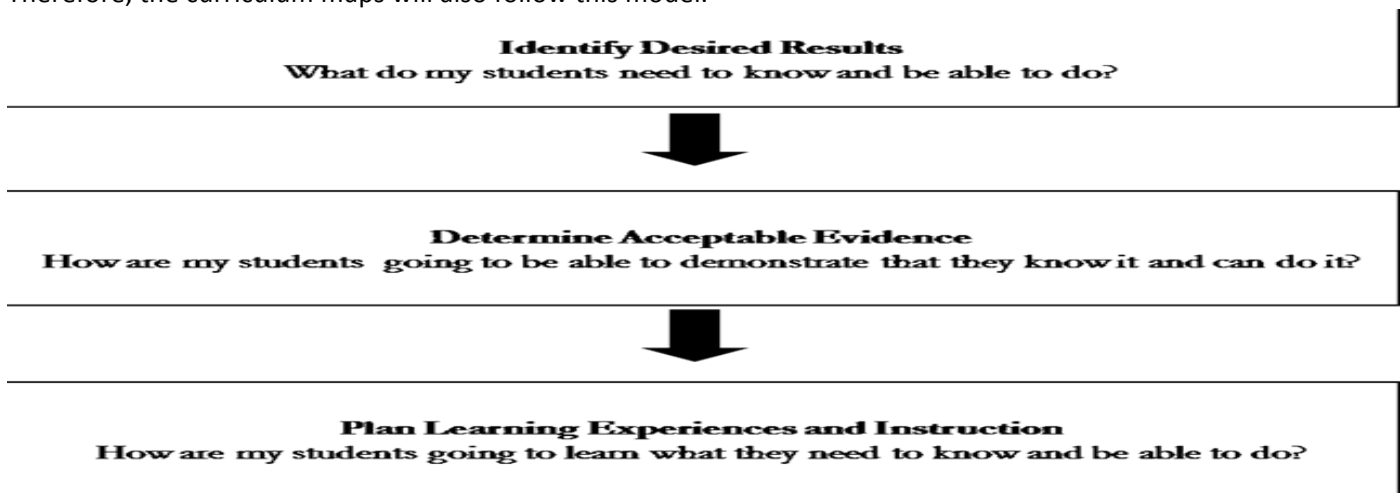
A. Yes, each unit of study begins with a pre-assessment and ends with a performance-based assessment. Throughout the units of study, the students demonstrate their learning through formative assessments including partner/group work during collaborative conversations, writing prompts, reflection journals, exit slips, and warm-up activities.

**7) Q. When will the Pacing Guides be changed to reflect the Common Core?**

A. For the 2012-2013 school year, the units of study were included in the elementary pacing guides. You will see that several stories in the K-3 ELA pacing guides were taken out to allow additional time for the units of study to occur. The units of study were also noted in the pacing guides for Grades 4-5. Through the summer writing teams, the K-12 pacing guides in all courses implementing the units of study will be changed to curriculum maps. The development of the curriculum maps support the units of study and bundling of standards required in the Common Core. The goal is to have the revised curriculum maps out to teachers by July 15, 2013.

**8) Q. How can teachers get more information on curriculum maps so that they can prepare for next year?**

A. The units of study were developed from the model of *Understanding By Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Therefore, the curriculum maps will also follow this model.



Santa Ana is following examples of curriculum maps developed by New York City, San Francisco and Baltimore which all follow the *Understanding By Design* approach. Elementary teachers can learn more about curriculum maps during the Elementary Curriculum Committee Meeting on May 23, 2013. Intermediate department chairs will learn more about them at the department chair meeting on May 30, 2013. High school department chairs will receive the same information at their department chair meeting on May 23 2013.

**9) Q. How have the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) teachers been involved in the implementation of Common Core?**

A. Through the support of Jim Thomas and Helena Hanna from OCDE, over 80 VAPA teachers from both the elementary and secondary level, met throughout the year to receive an introduction to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), discuss the impact of the CCSS to the arts and identify ways to align the arts with CCSS. A convocation in April brought the VAPA teachers together with Irvine Unified and Saddleback Unified to discuss rubrics and assessments in each discipline that aligns with CCSS.

**10) Q. Elementary school teachers have access to both the Open Court assessments and District developed Standards-Based Mini Assessments created two years ago. Which of these two assessments are more aligned to the Common Core?**

**A.** The Standards-Based Mini Assessments are aligned with the Common Core for three key reasons: 1) The questions require the students to apply their learning to a novel task, 2) The last question of each Standards-Based Mini Assessment requires the student to complete an extended response item to demonstrate learning which will be required with SBAC assessments, 3) There is a limited number of questions to decrease time focused on assessment which provides the teachers with additional instructional time to ensure students have time for close reading of text and analytical writing.