Implementation Feedback Report
Self-Reflection Tool

rev102018

This tool is intended to support schools as they self-assess the quality with which they implement the Core Knowledge approach. It is divided into five constructs:

The description of each construct shows what exemplary instruction looks like according to the Foundation's *Core Implementation Practices* document.

In order to best use this tool, we encourage school leaders as well as teachers to familiarize themselves with each construct first. Then we recommend leaders conduct a self-audit by strategically collecting data (e.g., discussions with individual teachers/grade-level teams, classroom observation, etc.) related to each construct.

If you would like to learn more about scheduling a certified consultant to visit your school and provide feedback around the aforementioned five constructs, please contact the Core Knowledge Foundation (https://www.coreknowledge.org/about-us/contact-us/).

1. Collaborative Planning with the 4-C Characteristics of Core Knowledge

Utilization of Planning Tools:

- The school has completed a **curriculum plan***; or uses pacing guides when implementing comprehensive curricular materials created by the Core Knowledge Foundation (CKF). These planning tools document the school-wide, yearlong calendar of grade-by-grade topics:
    - Core Knowledge content follows a **logical, coherent progression within a grade-level.**
        - For instruction developed around the *Core Knowledge Sequence*: Teachers can articulate what filters were applied when determining the order of topics.
    - When CKF's comprehensive units (e.g., CKLA and CKHG) are moved out of the recommended sequence, teachers can articulate how the new sequence fits together coherently, and potential gaps can be addressed. The planning tools indicate **when each topic/unit is taugh**t during the school year, and for what **duration.**
        - Adequate time is provided for each topic in order to expose students to key concepts and domain-specific vocabulary (e.g., two to four weeks).
    - The planning tools r**eflect a cumulative spiral of content across grades**. In situations where a school has moved or replaced Core Knowledge content, the revised sequence continues to advance knowledge building.
- Teachers create **domain maps** when planning their own units based on the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. These maps demonstrate an integrated approach to instructional planning (i.e., includes content/skills, prior/future knowledge, vocabulary, and cross-curricular connections). Note: domain maps are <u>not</u> required when teachers use CKF's comprehensive programs (e.g., CKHG).
- Teachers have access to and may utilize the curriculum plan and/or pacing guides as well as domain maps (when applicable).
    - Teachers use the planning tools to **guide instruction at each grade level/subject area.**
    - Teachers reference the tools in order to see the big picture as to **how content** and skills **build across grades/subject areas.**

Collaborative Planning Practices:

- Teachers collaboratively plan with the goal of a) delivering **content-rich** instruction that commands rigor; b) incrementally building knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary over time (i.e., **coherently** within a grade-level and **cumulatively** across the grades); and c) immersing students in authentic, **cross-curricular** instruction:
    - They select **rich Core Knowledge content****, vocabulary, and skills, and they sequence these logically and **coherently** within and **cumulatively** across grade levels.

1. Collaborative Planning with the 4-C Characteristics of Core Knowledge

- Teachers plan **cross-curricular connections** with input from other departments and special-area teachers, with the intent to establish mutual expectations and reinforce content and vocabulary.
  - When possible, classroom and special area teachers **coordinate the timing of instruction.** For example, the grade 5 history and geography unit "The Renaissance" would be taught at the same time as the visual arts unit "Art of the Renaissance," so students are immersed in this content throughout their day.
- Teachers from different grade levels who are teaching similar topics*** engage in vertical planning. Discussions regarding projects and culminating activities facilitate cross-grade interactions as well as limit repetition from grade-to-grade.

- Grade-level teams **collaborate** to:
  - share instructional strategies and resources that enhance learning
  - design common objectives and assessments that enhance instruction and build equity
  - discuss data and how to adjust instruction based on results

  Additionally, the staff collaborates annually to make necessary revisions to the aforementioned planning documents.

*When primarily developing instructional units based on the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, schools need to develop a curriculum plan. When schools only use comprehensive resources developed by CKF (e.g., CKLA, CKHG, CKsci), pacing guides can be used to demonstrate the scope and sequence of instruction. Schools that utilize both have the options to incorporate all topics into a curriculum plan, or to illustrate the coherence and cumulative nature of their instruction through both a curriculum plan and pacing guides.

**All Core Knowledge resources (e.g., Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA), Core Knowledge History and Geography (CKHG), Core Knowledge Science (CKSci), What Your __Grader Needs to Know, etc.) are derived from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Content and skills presented in each resource align with portions of the *Sequence*.

*** To identify topics which spiral through the grade-levels, review pages 268-269 (Core Knowledge At-a-Glance) in the 2010 edition of the *Core Knowledge Sequence.*

Construct #1 NOTES:

2. Effective Teaching Practices

Instruction Mirrors Planning:

- Teachers engage in instruction that mirrors intentional, collaborative planning:
    - There is a clear **match between the content noted in the planning tools** and the **content being taught in classrooms**.
    - Grade-level teams address the same topics at approximately the same time.

Aligned Instruction:

- During instruction, teachers communicate **kid-friendly, measurable objectives** to students, and **informally assess student progress** toward the day's objectives in order to aid students who need support.
- Instructional activities are designed to **help students meet the lesson's specific** and measurable objectives.
- **Criteria for success**—where applicable—clearly define what students need to produce or perform in order to be considered successful on an assessment.

Modeling, Practice & Support:

- Teachers **model concepts** and **skills** for students.
- Students are afforded distributed **practice opportunities** (i.e., **guided** and **independent**).
- Teachers provide **specific feedback** that clearly illustrate how students need to adjust or further enhance their work. Students are then afforded the opportunity to apply this feedback to improve their work.
- Teachers use **scaffolding** and **differentiation** to provide an appropriate level of challenge and to meet the various needs of students, so all learners can work toward a common objective.

Student Discourse & Active Engagement:

- Students participate **in meaningful discourse** that supports the lesson's purpose.
    - Opportunities are provided for both teacher–to–student and student–to-student discussions (see Construct #3).
- Students apply their learning by **actively engaging** in a variety of activities (e.g., group/partner work, hands-on investigations, etc.)

High Expectations:

- Teachers, through their words and actions, **exhibit high expectations** for all students:
    - Teachers consistently communicate the message that all children can be challenged and succeed.
    - Teachers' apply unbiased practices for calling on, giving attention to, and providing "wait time" for students.

2. Effective Teaching Practices

Technology Integration:

- Teachers use **media***, when appropriate, as a means of:
  - **presenting rich content** that is aligned with Core Knowledge topics.
  - assisting students with achieving stated, measurable objectives.
- Students use media as a means of **effectively engaging in lesson content**.

***Media** are defined as any digital learning tool that utilizes audio, video, pictures, and/or text to assist the building of knowledge and skill. Implementation of digital media in CK Schools may include—but is not limited to—software applications, virtual/e-learning environments, instructional videos, websites, etc.

Construct #2 NOTES:

3. Domain-Based Instruction

Content-Rich Instruction

- Content-rich instruction, based on the *Core Knowledge Sequence,* is evident in all grade levels served (e.g., K–8), including Visual Arts and Music.
- Teachers provide **regular instruction** in **history, science**, and **the arts.** (The arts, for example, are taught once a week, while science and history instruction is provided 3–5 days per week.)
- Instructional activities focus on **domain-rich concepts** and **vocabulary**.
- Students demonstrate **foundational understanding** and are able to **analyze/synthesize studied content**.
- Opportunities are provided for both **teacher–to–student** and **student–to–student discussions** around Core Knowledge content. Discussion is strategically structured:
    a) to promote use of domain-based vocabulary,
    b) to facilitate language development and elaboration, and
    c) to promote higher-level thinking and deep conceptual understanding.

Content-Skill Integration:

- When applicable, classroom and special area teachers **integrate** or **reinforce skills through rich Core Knowledge content**.

Cross-Curricular Instruction:

- When a topic is **addressed across multiple disciplines,** the classroom teacher encourages students to **connect current learning** to what was oris being **studied in a special area class**—and vice versa.
- Middle school teachers apply an **interdisciplinary approach**.
- Teachers provide opportunities for students to use **domain-specific vocabulary** as well as engage in activities that **deepen their understanding of these words across disciplines**.

Cumulative Nature of the *Sequence*:

- Instruction **builds on the knowledge and skills** students have been taught in **prior grades**.
- When applicable, teachers guide students with **connecting their current learning** to **previously learned content** (e.g., earlier in the current unit of study, school year, or at a previous grade level).
- Teachers use prior knowledge as a means of **promoting higher level thinking** around new content.

Construct #3 NOTES:

4. A Core Knowledge Approach to ELA & Math

ELA:
- The school uses a **comprehensive English language arts (ELA) program** guided by a documented scope and sequence.
- It is clear from evidence observed or gathered that each grade level follows their program's scope and sequence and only uses supplementary materials as a means of providing targeted support as needed.

Grades K–2
- Teachers implement an ELA program that includes a **systematic phonics-based component** as well as explicit instruction in handwriting, spelling, grammar, and the writing process. **Activities** and **student texts** provide children with an opportunity to **practice and apply skills** (e.g., letter-sound correspondences).
- Teachers **read aloud a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts** that are above students' independent reading level.
   - Teachers use content-rich texts as a vehicle to build background knowledge and vocabulary as well as address ELA skills (e.g., language and comprehension).
   - The read-aloud texts are also used to model close reading exercises at the oral language level (i.e., focus on the text's **qualitative dimensions of complexity***).

Grades 3–8
- Teachers **explicitly teach grammar, usage, spelling, and writing**, and frequently **integrate instruction of these ELA skills with rich, domain-related content** across academic subject areas.
- Teachers select sets of **domain related texts and passages** aligned to the *Core Knowledge Sequence* for both **read-alouds and independent reading**, so that a topic is read and studied for a sustained period, exposing students to rich academic and domain-specific vocabulary. These texts are also selected with attention to their **qualitative dimensions of complexity***.

Math:
- The school uses a math program with a **coherent scope and sequence**, which builds concepts and skills within and across grades. In situations where the publisher of the primary math program changes from one grade to the next (e.g., elementary to middle school), the programs have been assessed for gaps, teachers are made aware of these gaps, and supplemental materials are strategically used to close these gaps.
- The program promotes a balance of **conceptual understanding**, **computational fluency**, and **application**; in addition, the program provides opportunity and guidance to support teachers in fostering students' mathematical ability in each area.
- It is clear that each grade level follows its program's scope and sequence and only uses supplementary materials to provide targeted support, or additional practice, as needed.
- Teachers **foster students' abilities to understand concepts** from a number of perspectives and move students beyond perceiving math as a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures.
- In order to develop students' computational fluency, teachers **provide opportunities for practice** of core mathematical operations and procedures. Teachers use this computational foundation as a basis to help students understand more complex concepts and procedures.

4. A Core Knowledge Approach to ELA & Math

- To ensure that students **use math as a means of understanding and achieving a purpose**, teachers provide opportunities for students to apply math in the context of real-world problems.

ELA & Math Intervention:

- Intervention programs focus on providing **short term, targeted remediation**, informed by data.
- When push-out intervention is provided, transition back to the grade-level classroom is seamless.
- Interventionists **communicate frequently with classroom teachers** to ensure use of intervention methods and activities that support classroom instruction.
- Push-out intervention time is **strategically scheduled** to ensure that students do not miss Core Knowledge content addressed in their regular classroom, and that there is a seamless transition.

* See Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for a description of qualitative measures of text complexity.

Construct #4 NOTES:

5. Strong Leadership

Strong Vision & Commitment:
- Core Knowledge school leaders promote a school culture where Core Knowledge is the **central, guiding instructional framework at their school**.
- School leaders provide **vision, direction, and feedback to staff regarding their Core Knowledge implementation**.
- Leaders **model commitment** by building staff's understanding of the Core Knowledge approach as well as deepening their own (e.g., participating in Core Knowledge events and professional development, such as the Core Knowledge Leadership Institute).
- School leaders collaborate with designated personnel (e.g., Core Knowledge Coordinator) responsible for **supporting staff growth in regards to Core Knowledge implementation.**

Planning Time & Resources:
- To accommodate an integrated approach to instruction, leaders **schedule frequent planning time for teachers to meet within grade levels** and **occasional planning time for teachers to meet with special area teachers** and **across grade levels**.
- Leaders establish opportunities to **review pacing** (e.g., quarterly). When pacing challenges are revealed, leaders offer guidance with adjusting the curriculum plan and/or curriculum pacing guides. Leaders also extend needed supports in order to get instruction back on track.
- Leaders ensure that the teachers **integrate Core Knowledge content throughout the instructional day**.
- Leaders ensure that the **intervention time is strategically scheduled** to ensure students do not miss Core Knowledge content addressed in their regular classroom.
- Leaders **support teachers with the material and/or human resources** they need for a successful Core Knowledge implementation. They have established a system to assess needs and acquire additional resources.

Professional Development & Continuous Improvement:
- Leaders regularly walk through classrooms and conduct observations in order to see instruction in action.
- Leaders identify the **professional development teachers need**, provide it, and create support structures to ensure that training **transfers to practice**.
- Leaders **involve their staff in continuous improvement** through the review of planning documents, best practices, and data analysis.
- Leaders **develop and enact a school improvement plan**, or an equivalent tool, that sets goals for the enhancement of teaching, learning, and achievement.
- Leaders set up supports that promote **systemic change** in relation to the school improvement plan.

5. Strong Leadership

Parent & Community Partnerships:

- Parents are informed about what students are learning, are **invited to be partners in supporting their children with Core Knowledge curricula**, and are provided information and resources about how to do so.
    - Leaders and teachers build families understanding around the Core Knowledge approach and instructional materials used at the school.
    - Leaders and teachers encourage parents to attend (or volunteer) at school events.
    - Families are provided opportunities to support school initiatives or participate in school decisions (e.g., PTA, school improvement council, or other school committees).
- Leaders collaborate with staff and parents to **educate the larger community about Core Knowledge**.
    - Outreach **considers the total, diverse community.**
    - Leaders enlist businesses, agencies, and/or other groups to provide services to the school or community.

Construct #5 NOTES: