

Welcome to the Content Standards in English Language Arts module presented by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC).



This printable PDF version of a NCSC module has been provided for your convenience. The PDF version of the module will be very similar to the online module, with a few revisions to eliminate features that are only necessary in the online learning environment. Because the PDF presentations are the content of the online courses and retain the formatting and some of the features of the modules, we have included the following description. The NCSC professional development courses each consist of one or more modules. To help the learner navigate in the courses, the modules have a uniform design and format. All learning modules follow four themes: plot the course, explore the terrain, check the map, and expand your horizons. In plot the course learners discover what is covered in the module, including their learning objectives and other steps they will follow while viewing the module. In explore the terrain, the learner will engage with the content and learn about the topic covered in the module. In check the map the learner has the opportunity to review and self-assess their understanding. Some of the PDF presentations (printable versions of the modules) will not contain Check the Map sections as there are no self-assessments in the printable PDFs. Finally, expand your horizons offers ways in which the learner can explore the content further, or apply what they have learned. Theme Indicators appear on most slides to tell the user what type of content is contained in the slide.

## GOALS OF THE MODULE



Develop a working understanding of College and Career Readiness (CCR)

Develop an understanding of the:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or state adopted standards
- Learning Progressions
- Core Content Connectors (CCC)



The purpose of this module is for you to become familiar with Career and College Readiness Standards, the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards or your state standards, the Learning Progressions and the NCSC Core Content Connectors. This may be the first module that you participate in so that you are familiar with the background material and standards on which all the rest of the WIKI material is based.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE MODULE



- Review the Common Core State Standards
- Review the Learning Progressions in English Language Arts.  
[http://www.naacpartners.org/publications/ELA\\_LPF\\_12.2011\\_final.pdf](http://www.naacpartners.org/publications/ELA_LPF_12.2011_final.pdf)
- Complete 5 SELF ASSESSMENT items throughout the module.



This module will be following closely the information that is provided in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which were used in developing this material. If your state has adopted their own grade level content standards, you will need to become familiar with their format so that you can easily find the content standards each of your students need to follow. The National Alternate Assessment Center developed the Learning Progressions, which are based on the big ideas of the CCSS and most state standards. These are linked in the NCSC wiki. Have the common core state standards or your state's grade level content standards in English Language Arts available for reference and more detailed information while completing this module.

## RELATED CONCEPTS



Here are some concepts that will be discussed in this module. If you would like background on these concepts, click forward on the playbar. If you are familiar with the concepts and do not need additional background, click on the button labeled skip definitions.

- CCSS – Common Core State Standards or your state standards
- LPF – Learning Progressions Frameworks
- CCC – Core Content Connectors



In this module reference is made to the following concepts:

- CCSS - Common Core State Standards or Grade level content standards from your state.
- LPF - Learning progressions Frameworks
- CCC - Core Content Connectors

**RELATED CONCEPTS - CCSS  
COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

Your State has either developed their own grade level state standards or has adopted the Common Core State Standards to establish guidelines for learning in Math and English Language Arts from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Achieving the learning goals put forth in the standards will prepare students for college and career.



We based our work in all these modules on the CCSS and the College and Career Readiness Standards. You can apply the same process with your state standards.

Your State has either developed their own grade level state standards or has adopted the Common Core State Standards to establish guidelines for learning in Math and English Language Arts from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. These are based on the **College and Career Readiness Standards**.

The actual implementation of the standards, including how they are taught, the curriculum developed, and the materials used to support teachers as they help students reach the standards, is led entirely at the state and local levels.

## RELATED CONCEPTS - LPF LEARNING PROGRESSIONS FRAMEWORKS



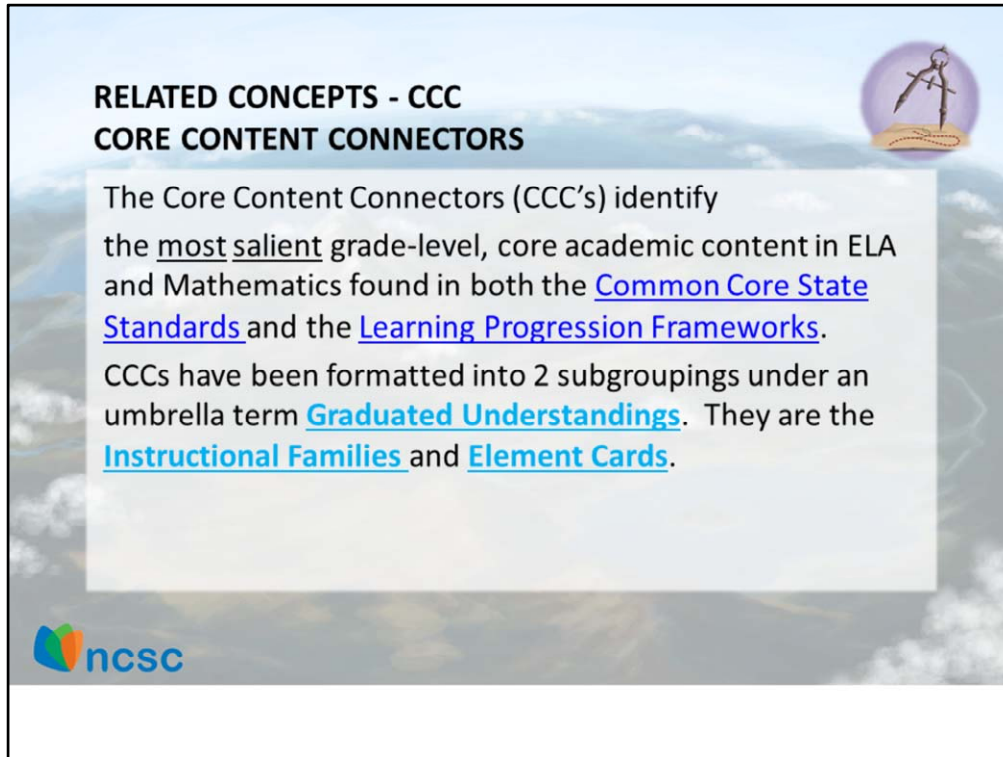
The Learning Progressions Frameworks:

- describe pathways for learning that focus on the big ideas of a discipline
- help educators design instruction and assessments that move students toward deeper and broader understanding of the content
- include progress indicators; descriptions of observable learning along the learning continuum in each strand



The Learning Progressions Frameworks, or LPF, present a broad description of the essential content and general sequencing for student learning and skill development (Hess, 2010). The LPF is a hypothesized pathway that typical peers may take, and is meant to inform what typical peers will be working on grade by grade. In the past, we have struggled to understand how to choose content grade by grade to ensure inclusion of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grade AND age appropriate content, even though they may not have built all the skills in a previous grade. The pathways focus on the big ideas of a discipline.


The LPFs give us the educational logic to help move these students along with their peers in a systematic, educationally sound way. The LPF contain learning targets and progress indicators that are referenced in the NCSC Curriculum and Instruction materials. Learning targets (general/broad performance descriptors) are defined by grade spans, K-4, 5-8 and High School. Related specific skills and concepts are called the progress indicators (PIs).



## RELATED CONCEPTS - CCC CORE CONTENT CONNECTORS

The Core Content Connectors (CCC's) identify the most salient grade-level, core academic content in ELA and Mathematics found in both the [Common Core State Standards](#) and the [Learning Progression Frameworks](#).

CCCs have been formatted into 2 subgroupings under an umbrella term [Graduated Understandings](#). They are the [Instructional Families](#) and [Element Cards](#).



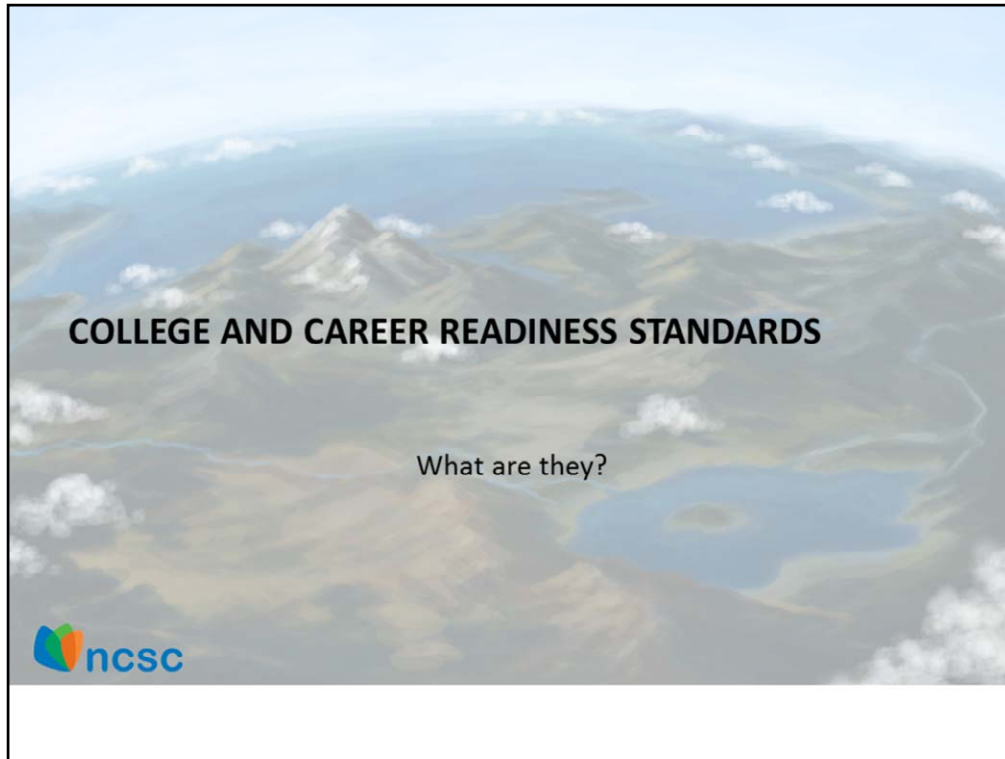
The Core Content Connectors (CCC's) identify the most salient grade-level, core academic content in ELA and Mathematics found in both the [Common Core State Standards](#) and the [Learning Progression Frameworks](#) and similar content can be found in your state standards.

Using the LPF, NCSC identified the “big ideas” from Common Core State Standards needed to make progress through the grades.

These “big ideas” were then broken down into more frequent benchmarks called CCCs that provide a pathway to the grade level standards-not extended standards. CCCs are the basis for the assessment, but not the starting point for instruction. Please refer to the Developing ELA Lessons Using the 5 Step Process module for a starting point for instruction.

CCCs are the basis for the assessment, but not the starting point for instruction. The original format for the CCCs is a list by grade and content that has been reformatted into Instructional Families; a graphic representation of the relationships between the CCC's, the CCSS, and the LPFs. In addition Element Cards have been developed that tie together key components and provide ideas for instruction, supports and scaffolds.





What are the College and Career Readiness Standards and how do they pertain to students with intellectual disabilities?  
In this section we'll review the College and Career Readiness Standards and how they are used in the alternate assessment.


**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS OR YOUR STATE STANDARDS**

Implementation of grade level content standards:

- how the standards are taught
- the curriculum developed
- the materials used to support teachers as they help students reach the standards

This is led entirely at the state and local levels.

Common Core State Standards and the majority of state standards are based on **college and career readiness standards**.




State education standards have been around since the early 1990s. By the early 2000s, every state had developed and adopted its own learning standards that specify what students in grades 3-8 and high school should be able to do. Every state also had its own definition of proficiency, which is the level at which a student is determined to be sufficiently educated at each grade level and upon graduation. This lack of standardization was one reason why states decided to develop the Common Core State Standards in 2009.

State education chiefs and governors in 48 states came together to develop the Common Core, with critical input of teachers and standards experts from across the country.

The actual implementation of the Common Core, including how the standards are taught, the curriculum developed, and the materials used to support teachers as they help students reach the standards, is led entirely at the state and local levels.

Common Core State Standards are based on **college and career readiness standards**.


## COLLEGE AND CAREER READY FOR ALL...



Components in a Comprehensive Definition of College Readiness for typical high school students

- Key Cognitive Strategies  
Problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, critical thinking
- Academic Knowledge and Skills through Key Content  
Full Access to the general curriculum to maximize life long learning
- Academic Behaviors  
Self monitoring, time management, using information resources, social interaction skills
- Contextual Skills and Awareness  
Seeking help with admissions, procedures, group interaction skills

(Conley, 2007)



Understanding the components of College Readiness for typical high school students and the projected outcomes will assist special education teachers in not only planning instruction but in transition planning as well.

College and Career Readiness was conceptualized by David Conley. His components listed here are both the *result* of students achieving the academic competence, as well as the *means* by which they gain increasingly complex knowledge as they progress through these standards.

Key cognitive strategies refer to such things as intellectual curiosity for deeper understanding; engagement in active inquiry; ability to analyze data, material and sources for quality; construction of well reasoned arguments; interpretation of evidence; application of precision and accuracy of a task; and problem solving.

Within the second component, academic knowledge and skills, Conley suggested writing and research are overarching themes for college success, with extensive knowledge in core academic areas of English, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages and the arts.

The third component is academic behavior. Academic behavior refers to a form of self-monitoring where the student judges his/her level of mastery and possible areas of confusion, and the ability to reflect on what worked and what could be improved upon. In addition, academic behavior refers to the student's ability to work independently outside of class for success by going beyond textbooks and homework and encompassing a critical set of study and personal management skills (e.g., judging the time requirements for certain tasks, allocating sufficient time for tasks, etc.) which includes social interaction skills.

The final component in Conley's model - contextual skills and awareness - refers to how a student manages and navigates within a —college system, including admissions requirements, timelines, and processes.

## CAREER READINESS FOR ALL



### **Preparedness for workplace:**

possessing reading and mathematics knowledge and skills needed to qualify for an occupation's job training program; it does not necessarily mean that the qualifications to be hired for a job have been met (NAGB, 2009).



Using the CCR components, transition to work for all students is defined as 'Preparedness for workplace' and refers to the reading and mathematics knowledge and skills needed to qualify for an occupation's job training program; it does not necessarily mean that the qualifications to be hired for a job have been met (NAGB, 2009).

## CAREER READINESS FOR ALL



Sample preparedness pathways include:

- Apprenticeship programs
- Community College certification
- Job training programs
- On the job training
- Vocational technical institutes



Preparedness has several sample pathways:

- Apprenticeship programs
- Community College certification
- Job training programs
- On the job training
- Vocational technical institutes

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES?



Kearns, Kleinert, Harrison, Shepard-Jones, Hall, Jones in 2010 define comparable College, Career and Community components as -

- 1) Communicative competence
- 2) Fluency in reading, writing, and math
- 3) Age appropriate social skills and the ability to work effectively in small groups
- 4) Independent work behaviors
- 5) Accessing support systems



What does this mean for students with intellectual disabilities? Kearns, Kleinert, Harrison, Shepard-Jones, Hall, and Jones (2010) defined comparable College, Career and Community components. These key components include:

1. Recognizing and developing communicative competence should be addressed for students with significant cognitive disabilities by Kindergarten. Communicative competence forms the foundation of academic learning in reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as the pursuit of knowledge. Indeed, access to the general curriculum cannot be fully achieved for students who are perceived to lack symbolic language.
2. Fluency in reading, writing, and math are necessary for the pursuit of information whether used for lifelong learning, leisure, or vocational purposes.
3. Age appropriate social skills and the ability to work effectively in small groups are essential for future educational as well as vocational pursuits.
4. Independent work behaviors, as well as assistance seeking behaviors, are critical for lifelong learning pursuits including vocational success.
5. Skills in accessing support systems are essential for long-term success. Students with significant disabilities in particular will likely need external supports in the form of peer networks, study groups, co-worker supports, and other forms of educational and community supports.

The full paper **What Does 'College and Career Ready' mean for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities?**

can be found on the [NAACpartners.org](http://NAACpartners.org) website.



This is how Kearns, et al's components align with David Conley's components for Career and College Readiness:

**Academic Access** aligns with: **Key Cognitive Strategies**, *Problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, critical thinking* and **Key Content**, *Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies*

**Career development** and **Integration with College Systems and Practices** aligns with: **Contextual Skills and Awareness** *Seeking help with admissions, procedures, career development* (Conley, 2007)

**Social networks** and **Self Determination** aligns with: **Academic Behaviors** *Self monitoring, time management, using information resources, social interaction skills, working in groups*

Finally, *Coordination and Collaboration* are key to students success. With student-centered planning, interagency collaboration, high school curricula that include access to *both* life skill instruction and the general curriculum, access to paid employment while in high school, and family involvement students with intellectual disabilities have opportunities to acquire the components of College and Career Readiness.



## CHECK FOR LEARNING



Kearns, et al (2010) have defined College, Career and Community components comparable to Conley's 2008 college and career readiness components: as:

- 1) Communicative competence
- 2) Fluency in reading, writing, and math
- 3) Age appropriate social skills and the ability to work effectively in small groups
- 4) Independent work behaviors
- 5) Accessing support systems



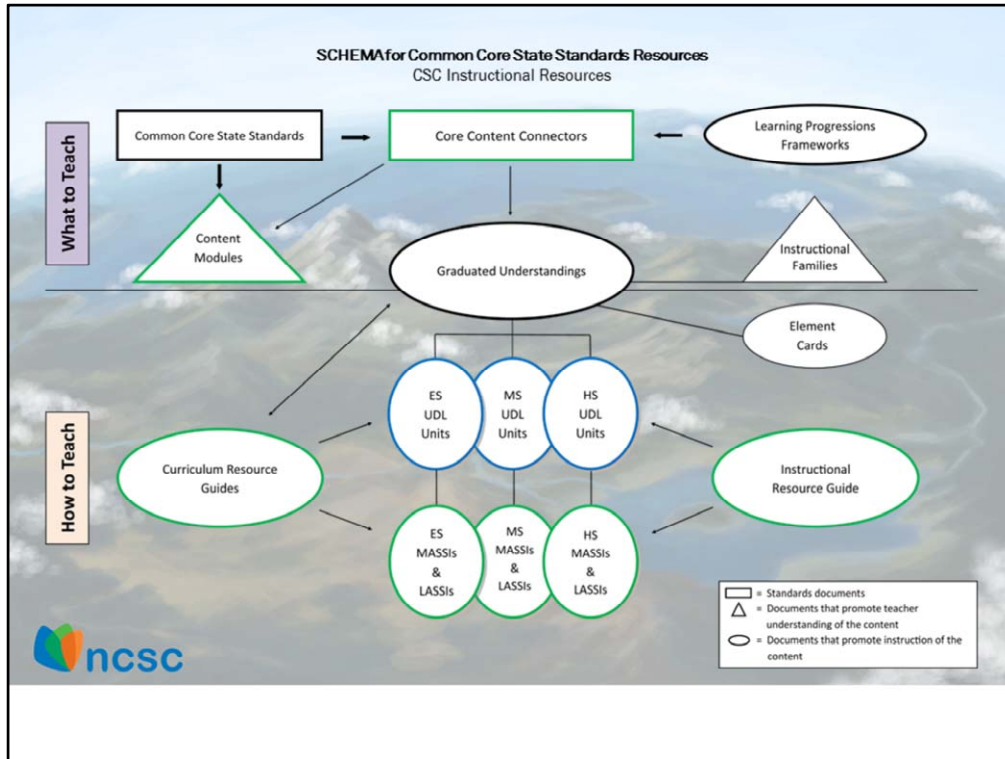
Kearns, Kleinert, Harrison, Shepard-Jones, Hall, Jones (2010) have defined comparable College, Career and Community components as:

- 1) Communicative competence
- 2) Fluency in reading, writing, and math
- 3) Age appropriate social skills and the ability to work effectively in small groups
- 4) Independent work behaviors
- 5) Accessing support systems

Please check the reference page for this resource.



In this section we'll review the standards materials used by NCSC to develop the alternate assessment. Where are they and what do they look like? Let's look at the main resources in the WIKI – CCSS, Learning Progressions and Core Content Connectors. If your state has adopted their own grade level content standards, then you will need to find where they are located online.



The NCSC instructional resources schema defines the “what” and “how” when planning for and teaching academic content to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The purple band describes the “**what** to teach” based on the Common Core State Standards, the Learning Progressions, and the Core Content Connectors that are linked to both. The CCSS and most state standards have a specific format but are very similar when stating what a student should know and be able to do. This similarity carried over to the Learning Progressions Framework and the Core Content Connectors. The orange band provides instructional tools to support **how** to teach this content - based on over a decade of research on academic instruction, communication, and learner characteristics of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

## CONTENT STANDARDS



To understand how to develop instruction based on the Common Core or your state standards, you must first

- know how the document is organized, and
- know how to find grade level standards.



To understand how to develop standards-based instruction you need to understand how either the CCSS or your state's grade level content standards are organized and how to find grade level standards.

When you use state standards, make sure that you understand how to find your student's grade level content standards in that document and how the standards are broken down from big ideas to smaller performance statements or benchmarks. Your district has curriculum and materials guidance no matter what standards are used. This guidance or these requirements are a local or state decision. There are two great resources for special education teachers. One is a general education teacher. They build daily lessons around the state or district's guidance on curriculum and can answer your questions. The other is a district level curriculum specialist or the person(s) that fills that role at the local level.

## THINKING AHEAD



For which grade(s) *(or for High School which conceptual categories)* do you need to become more familiar with the Common Core State Standards or your content standards?

What general education resources do you have? (e.g., general education colleagues with whom you can collaborate, your own content knowledge, district curriculum guides, etc.)



Here are a few questions to start with:

For which grade(s) *(or for High School which conceptual categories)* do you need to become more familiar with the Common Core State Standards or your content standards?

What general education resources do you have? (e.g., general education colleagues with whom you can collaborate, your own content knowledge, district curriculum guides, etc.)

## RELATED CONCEPTS - LPF LEARNING PROGRESSIONS FRAMEWORKS



The Learning Progressions Frameworks:

- describe pathways for learning that focus on the big ideas of a discipline
- help educators design instruction and assessments that move students toward deeper and broader understanding of the content
- include progress indicators; descriptions of observable learning along the learning continuum in each strand



The next set of materials are the Learning Progressions. These were developed through the NAAC grant by Dr. Karin Hess, NCIEA, and a team of content experts, with University of Kentucky staff facilitating. The Learning Progressions Frameworks, or LPF, present a broad description of the essential content and general sequencing for student learning and skill development (Hess, 2010). The LPF is a hypothesized pathway that typical peers may take, and is meant to inform what typical peers will be working on grade by grade. In the past, we have struggled to understand how to choose content grade by grade to ensure inclusion of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grade AND age appropriate content, even though they may not have built all the skills in a previous grade. The pathways focus on the big ideas of a discipline.

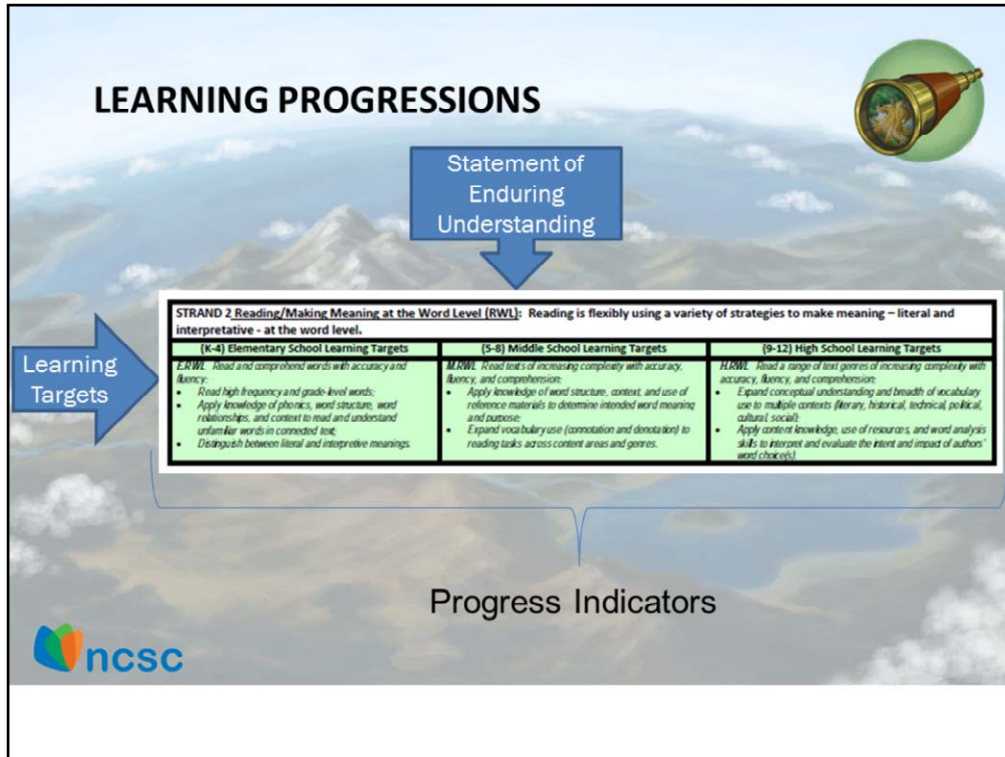
It is not the intent that skills/concepts from a particular mathematical strand or English Language Arts area be taught in isolation in a linear sequence, but rather be integrated among strands or areas, such as in a reading comprehension situation where students are demonstrating their understanding of plot or setting concepts while applying their knowledge of reading as defined by their mode of communication. In other words, the LPFs should be thought of a general map for learning and not a single route to a destination

## THINK MAP VS. ROUTE



Learning progressions allow students to travel different roads to arrive at the same location, as you see on a map, versus having to follow a specific route. They take into account hypothesized pathways that describe how most students typically learn concepts and big ideas and are tested with typically developing children.

The LPFs give us the educational logic to help move these students along with their peers in a logical, educationally sound way. The LPF contain learning targets and progress indicators that are referenced in the NCSC Curriculum and Instruction materials. Learning targets (general/broad performance descriptors) are defined by grade spans, K-4, 5-8 and high school.



This is an example of the learning progressions from K-2 through HS for English Language Arts in the area of Making Meaning at the word level.

The learning targets show a typical progression from one grade span to the next. Progress indicators describe concepts and skills along the learning continuum for each grade span. These skills and concepts build toward successful demonstration of learning targets. The suggested order of PIs is based on a review of empirical research. How a student with intellectual disabilities moves through the PI's is their individualized learning.



## CORE CONTENT CONNECTORS (CCCs)




- Using the LPFs, NCSC identified the “big ideas” from Common Core State Standards needed to make progress through the grades.
- These “big ideas” were then broken down into more frequent benchmarks called CCCs that provide a pathway to the CCSS-not extended standards.
- CCCs are the basis for the assessment, but the starting point for instruction



Using the LPF, NCSC identified the “big ideas” from Common Core State Standards needed to make progress through the grades


These “big ideas” were then broken down into more frequent benchmarks called CCCs that provide a pathway to the CCSS-not extended standards

CCCs are the basis for the assessment, and the starting point for instruction

**CCC EXAMPLE** 

**Common Core State Standard-** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**CCC-** Ask and answer questions\* about key details in a text.  
\*Instead of an oral or written response, some students may use picture symbols, character figures and props, etc.



Here is an example of a Core Content Connector derived from a Common Core State Standard:

**Common Core State Standard-** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

**CCC-** Ask and answer questions\* about key details in a text.

\*Instead of an oral or written response, some students may use picture symbols, character figures and props, etc.

How are these the same? How are they different? The CCC gets to the big idea of the standard – key detail in text and then notes how the student can use multiple ways to show what they know.


## WHY CORE CONTENT CONNECTORS (CCCs)?

Purpose: Help to fully align a system of content, instruction, and assessment

- connections between the Learning Progressions' Progress Indicators and the CCSS
- *Pinpoint the starting point* to plan instruction and assessment

CCCs were used by NCSC:

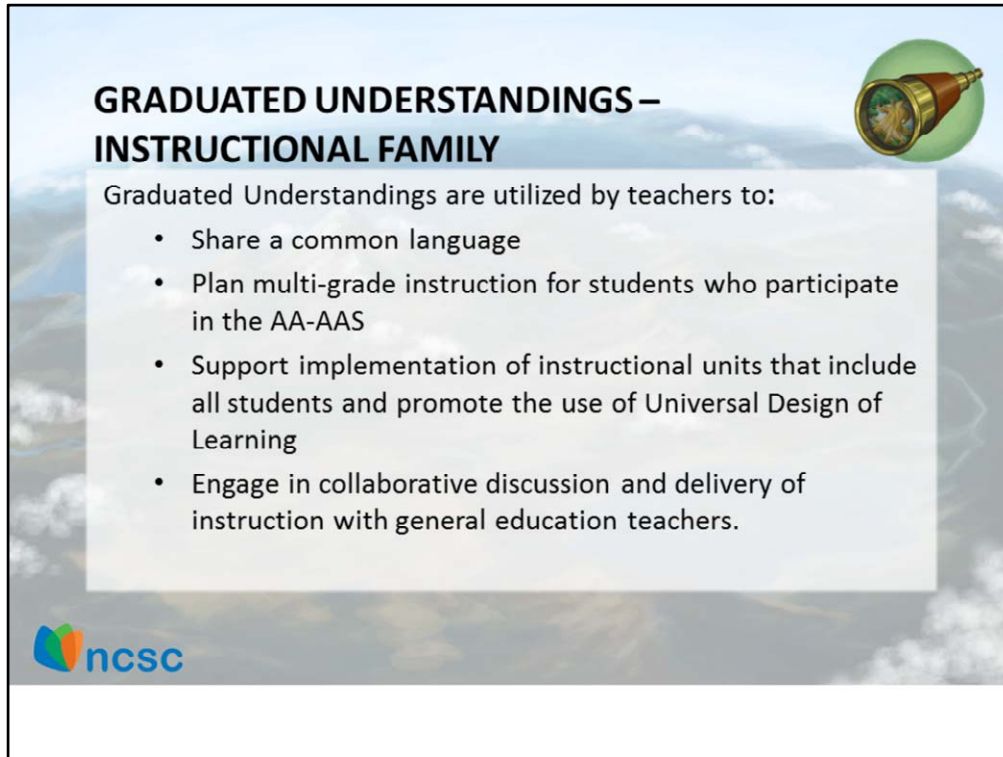
- to create the alternate assessment items
- to create curricular guides
- for professional development



The purpose of the CCCs is to contribute to a fully aligned and coherent system of content, instruction, and assessment.

The Core Content Connectors will serve as the prioritized content for Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities. The connectors preserve the sequence of learning outlined in the Learning Progressions to the extent possible while disaggregating the progress indicators into teachable and assessable segments of content. The connectors also serve as the framework to identify the prioritized content within the CCSS. The connectors and corresponding curriculum resource documents were written to help promote student engagement in the CCSS while following the learning progressions.

NCSC partners used the Core Content Connectors to create alternate assessment items, They also used the Core Content Connectors to create curricular guides and as a resource in Professional Development.



## GRADUATED UNDERSTANDINGS – INSTRUCTIONAL FAMILY

Graduated Understandings are utilized by teachers to:

- Share a common language
- Plan multi-grade instruction for students who participate in the AA-AAS
- Support implementation of instructional units that include all students and promote the use of Universal Design of Learning
- Engage in collaborative discussion and delivery of instruction with general education teachers.

ncsc

Graduated Understandings are comprised of two resources: the Instructional Families and the Element Cards.

Graduated Understandings are utilized by teachers to:

Share a common language;

Plan multi-grade instruction for students who participate in the AA-AAS with a wide range of abilities and challenges;

Support implementation of instructional units that include all students and promote the use of Universal Design of Learning; and

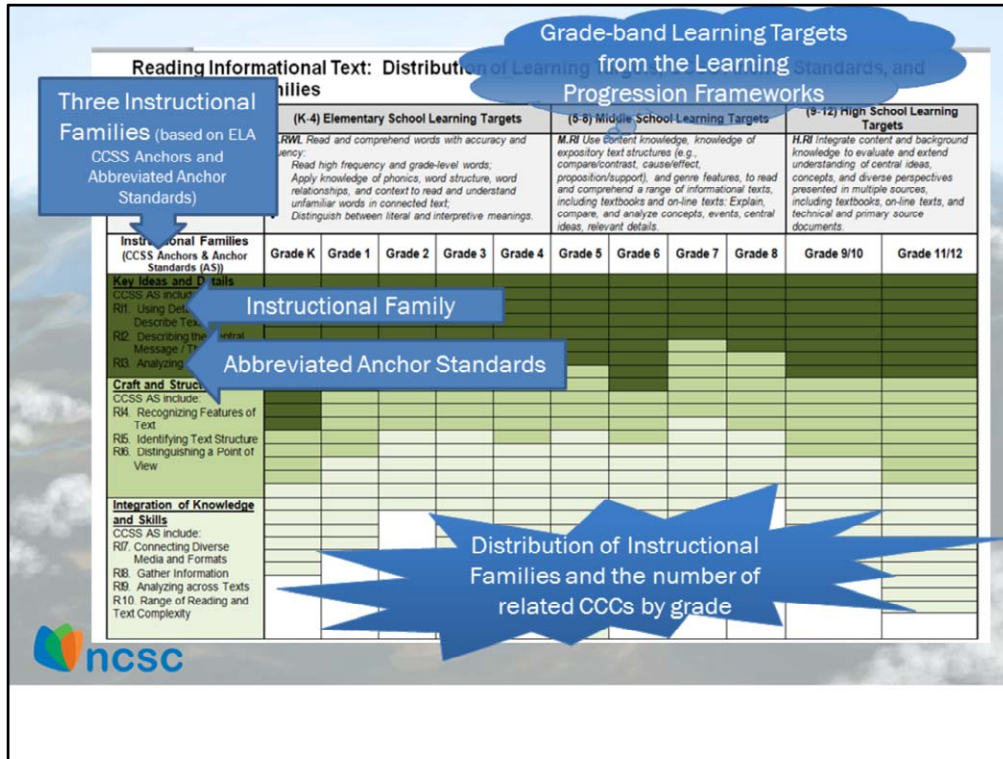
Engage in collaborative discussion and delivery of instruction with general education teachers.

Remember that the Core Content Connectors are the Learning Progressions broken down into smaller parts.

**The Instructional Families** are the Core Content Connectors organized to articulate big ideas and related instructional content. THEY ARE NOT EXTENDED STANDARDS or lowered Depth Of Knowledge. Families are grouped to provide a structure/schema for teachers which articulate emphasized content within and across grades.

Instructional families have been developed by the main strands noted within the CCSS and Learning Progressions. The second component of the Graduated Understandings, the

Element Cards, were developed to support teachers' understanding of the Core Content Connectors and to provide instructional strategies.



This shows one page from the ELA Graduated Understandings and provides a very general overview of key areas. Please go to the Instructional Families for the grade level and content you teacher for more detail. Here are the key areas for this page: At the top are the grade band learning targets from the Learning Progressions Frameworks. Down the side are the 3 instructional families grouped under these targets. Across are the grades and distribution of the instructional families and numbers of related CCCs in each.

The GUs provide educators with an easily interpreted visual representation of the areas of curricular emphasis within and across grades using color-coded charts (illustrating the Instructional Families) and “drill down” to possible instructional strategies and supports and scaffolds, specific to the Core Content Connectors through Element Cards.

Three views of the instructional families (color-coded charts) are organized by:

- 1) The Distribution of Instructional Families referenced to the LPF learning targets by grade and instructional families;
- 2) The Overview of the CCCs: Grade, instructional family, and Core Content Connectors (CCCs); and
- 3) Instructional families and CCCs (grades K – 12) and referenced back to the related CCSS English Language Arts domains.

Instructional Families illustrate the variation in distribution and changes in emphasis of the core content, knowledge and skills of the CCSS that students are expected to learn at each grade to promote success in the next grade and to reach the learning targets within the LPF across grades kindergarten through high school.

Given that students may receive instruction in multi-grade classrooms, a teacher can quickly see where there is an “overlap” of instructional families across grades. The teacher can then plan instruction that addresses related content within and across families at appropriate levels of instruction for different students within the same lesson.

This information is explained in greater detail in the Graduated Understandings Module.

## CHECK FOR LEARNING



The **Learning Progressions** are descriptions of the successively more sophisticated ways of thinking about an idea that follow one another as students learn. They are not a scope and sequence but are pathways about how most students typically learn concepts and big ideas.

The **Core Content Connectors** preserve the sequence of learning outlined in the Learning Progressions to the extent possible while disaggregating the progress indicators into teachable and assessable segments of content.

**Graduated Understandings** provide educators with easily interpreted visual representations of the areas of curricular emphasis within and across grades.



Remember: The Learning Progressions are descriptions of the successively more sophisticated ways of thinking about an idea that follow one another as students learn. They are not a scope and sequence but are pathways about how most students typically learn concepts and big ideas.


The connectors preserve the sequence of learning outlined in the Learning Progressions to the extent possible while disaggregating the progress indicators into teachable and assessable segments of content.

Graduated Understandings, an umbrella term for the Instructional Families and Element Cards, provide educators with easily interpreted visual representations of the areas of curricular emphasis within and across grades.

## NEXT STEPS

**Review the resources**

**Suggestion:**  
Go on to the *Graduated Understandings in English Language Arts* Module.

 ncsc

This concludes the Content Standards Module

**What to do next?**

**Review the resources-** especially the white paper written by Kearns et al. (2010) titled: [\*What Does 'College and Career Ready' mean for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities?\*](#)

**Go on to the** – Graduated Understandings in English Language Arts module.



## REFERENCES



Conley, D. (2007). *Redefining college readiness*. Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center. Cox-Lindenbaum, D., & Watson, S.L. (2002).

Hess, Karin K., (December 2011). Learning Progressions Frameworks Designed for Use with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts & Literacy K-12

Kearns, J., Kleinert, H., Harrison, B., Sheppard-Jones, K., Hall, M., Jones, M. (2010). *What does 'college and career ready' mean for students with significant cognitive disabilities?* Lexington: University of Kentucky.

Think College Institute for Community Inclusion University of Massachusetts: Boston (Weir, Hart, & Grigal)



These references were used in the writing of this module and will provide further detail on concepts covered.