June 2019

Core Implementation Practices

A Guide to Effective Implementation of Core Knowledge

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Summary

Core Implementation Practices: A Guide to Effective Implementation of Core Knowledge is part of a suite of tools that is essential for schools wishing to implement Core Knowledge with a high degree of fidelity. These tools are designed to guide planning, implementation, development, and evaluation of Core Knowledge programs.

I. Introduction

The idea behind Core Knowledge is simple and powerful: knowledge builds on knowledge. It's not merely nice for kids to "know stuff;" it's essential. A broad base of knowledge directly contributes to language growth and your ability to learn even more. This insight, well-established by cognitive science, has profound implications for teaching and learning. Nearly all of our most important goals for education–greater reading comprehension, the ability to think critically and solve problems, even higher test scores–are a function of the depth and breadth of our knowledge.

By outlining the precise content that every child should learn in language arts and literature, history and geography, mathematics, science, music, and the visual arts, the *Core Knowledge Sequence* represents a first-of-its kind effort to identify the content and skills that comprise the foundational knowledge every child needs to reach these goals–and to teach them, grade-by-grade, year-by-year, in a coherent, age-appropriate sequence.

The Core Knowledge Foundation is dedicated to the mission expressed in our motto–*educational excellence and equity for all children*. We believe that every person in a diverse democratic society deserves equal access to the common knowledge base that draws together its people, while recognizing our differing traditions and contributions. We believe that offering universal access to this shared knowledge is a primary duty of schooling, critical to literacy, and to the closing of the achievement gap between ethnic and racial groups. Most important of all, we believe that shared knowledge and shared ideals of liberty and tolerance are indispensable ingredients for effective citizenship and for the perpetuation of our democratic institutions.

Effective Implementation of Core Knowledge

Successful implementation begins with interested schools understanding and embracing the ideas and insights behind the *Core Knowledge Sequence*:

For the sake of excellence, greater equity, and higher literacy, schools need to teach a coherent, cumulative, and content-specific core curriculum. This curriculum, informed by the firmly established connection between language, background knowledge, and reading comprehension, makes productive use of the language arts block to immerse students in each subject matter context (scientists call it a "domain") long enough for them to become familiar with its concepts and vocabulary.

Effective implementation of Core Knowledge is also guided by a set of practices, detailed in subsequent sections of this document, and outlined below:

- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge is guided by the Core Knowledge curricular resources and philosophy.
- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge requires planning and communication.
- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge is an ongoing process.
- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge depends on effective teaching.
- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge must be coupled with strong leadership.
- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge is strengthened by community involvement.
- Effective implementation of Core Knowledge requires resources and support.

Collaboration versus Compliance

We strongly believe that the role of the Core Knowledge Foundation is not to evaluate individual teachers or school administrators. Our goal is to work collaboratively with schools to continuously improve and refine the quality and fidelity of their Core Knowledge implementation, within the context of their unique environments and challenges. Thus, the *Core Implementation Practices* are presented to demonstrate ideals toward which each school should continuously strive.

II. Core Implementation Practices

The Core Knowledge Curriculum and Approach

The Core Knowledge philosophy is informed by the **undeniable connection between language, background knowledge, and reading comprehension**. This connection, well-established by cognitive science, is described in detail in many works of the Core Knowledge Foundation, including *The Knowledge Deficit* by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Appendix A of the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, and the *Core Knowledge Overview* presentation.

In summary, the connections are evidenced by the following research-based understandings:

- **A rich base of background knowledge is required for reading comprehension** (Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999; Hirsch, 2006; O'Reilly & McNamara, 2007).
- **Oral language precedes written language development** and instruction should be informed by the milestones associated with both the development of oral language (listening and speaking) and the development of written language (reading and writing).
- **Most vocabulary is acquired implicitly**, in the early grades through hearing words spoken in context, and later through reading words in context (Stanovich, 1993).
- Oral speech tends to use a smaller, less rich vocabulary than written speech, i.e., texts (Ahyes & Ahrens, 1988; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Stanovich, 1993).
- **Listening comprehension outpaces reading comprehension** until middle school age (Sticht, 1974).
- **Vocabulary acquisition is an inherently slow and gradual process**, but the process can be facilitated by frequent exposure to related words within the context of a related topic, or domain, of study (Miller, 1999).
- **Knowledge builds on knowledge**. A rich base of factual knowledge facilitates additional learning and enhances cognitive processes like problem solving and reasoning (Willingham, 2006).

These understandings inform instruction in Core Knowledge classrooms as articulated by the curriculum implementation practices on the following page.

1.	Curriculum Implementation Practices
1.1	The school implements a content-rich, coherent, cumulative curriculum.
1.2	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.
1.3	Teachers present Core Knowledge topics within the context of coherent domain-based units.
1.4	Teachers impart broad, rich content knowledge through a system of coherent domain-based units that frequently employ read-alouds and related discussions to promote listening comprehension and language skills.
1.5	Teachers immerse students in each domain-based unit long enough for them to become familiar with its key concepts and vocabulary (usually 2 weeks or more).
1.6	There is a clear and intentional focus on developing language skills, including but not limited to vocabulary.
1.7	Instructional units are designed with context and cross-curricular connections in mind.
1.8	Core Knowledge serves as a "mast" to which other curricular initiatives are linked.

What Curriculum Implementation Practices Look Like in Action

A school is successful in demonstrating these practices when Core Knowledge serves as the foundation of all curricular activities. Successful schools work to integrate all of their instructional initiatives with Core Knowledge because they recognize that too many and/or too disparate curricular initiatives dilute focus and effects.

Successful schools implement the *Core Knowledge Sequence* framework and/or content-rich comprehensive resources (i.e., CKLA, CKHG, CKSci). Successful schools focus selectively and coherently on the knowledge that is going to be the most productive for gaining proficiency in language—the content and skills outlined in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. There is a demonstrated understanding of the progression of language development, particularly with regard to the foundation provided by listening and speaking for later reading and writing. Successful schools use frequent, content-rich read-alouds to leverage students' listening comprehension in the early grades as a means of imparting the broad rich content knowledge that drives vocabulary growth and language skills while facilitating reading comprehension. Successful schools make sure that students stay immersed in each domain long enough for them to become familiar with its concepts and vocabulary.

Successful Core Knowledge schools recognize that both content and skills are essential; teachers in these schools embed the teaching of critical skills within the content they share with their students. The skill objectives are most effectively targeted when they are anchored to content in the context of a domain of knowledge.

Coherent Domains are the Key to Successful Implementation

The differences between a successful Core Knowledge implementation and one that is emerging or developing can be subtle. A school, for example, may address Core Knowledge

content but not in domain-based units, or with insufficient attention to cross-curricular connections. The duration of instructional units may not last long enough to foster student familiarity with the content, concepts, and vocabulary of the domain or planning may be insufficient to maximize language development during instruction.

The key to understand the difference between optimal and less-than-optimal implementation is in understanding both what a domain is and isn't and the concept of coherence.

What is a Domain?

A domain is an area of study that has a related set of language and vocabulary. Domains, like traditional units of study, are comprised of related topics. However, domains differ from *themes* or *concepts* in a few important ways.

First, domain sub-topics are related to one another and build coherently. Second, domain knowledge often builds within and across grade-levels. Third, the vocabulary of domain sub-topics is also related and builds coherently. Finally, overarching conceptual knowledge is built within the context of the domain content. It is precisely this building of content and repetition of vocabulary that provides the benefits of domain-based instruction. Consider the following examples:

Domain: ***Human Body***	**Theme:** ***Community Helpers***	**Concept:** ***Energy Transformation***
Students study the human body **across multiple grades.** Students first learn the parts of the body, then about the body systems, then they use that prior knowledge to develop an understanding of germs, diseases, and illness prevention. They use their knowledge of body systems, germs, and diseases to understand Edward Jenner's role with the small pox vaccine. **Both the content of the topics and the related vocabulary build coherently**. Understanding of what an *immune system* and an *antibody* are support understanding of what a *vaccination* is. These understandings enable students to grasp the significance of Edward Jenner's work. **Domains also provide a vehicle for addressing a variety of concepts in context** (e.g. concepts demonstrated through study of the human body include change, interdependence, cycles, and systems).	Students learn about a variety of helpers in the community. These helpers, although all part of the community, are not related to one another. The librarian and the police officer are not related. **There is little repetition of the vocabulary associated with each sub-topic**. **What students learn about one sub-topic** (librarians) **doesn't support their understanding of another sub-topic** (police officers). Finally, **themes are not likely to be repeated across the grades to enhance and extend understanding.**	Students learn about energy transformation in the context of a variety of situations including photosynthesis, digestion, and fuel combustion. **There is little repetition of the vocabulary associated with each sub-topic**. Content is addressed to provide an example of the concept. Although each sub-topic demonstrates the concept of energy transformation, **there is little relationship between subtopics allowing students to build their knowledge** of plants, humans, and engines throughout the unit.

Domain-based instruction provides for the acquisition of content and the repetition of vocabulary, which are essential to reading comprehension.

> *Research repeatedly shows prior domain knowledge to be a far stronger predictor of students' ability to comprehend or to learn from advanced texts. Of course, students' comprehension and learning is also influenced by their reading skills (such as decoding and fluency). But even the advantage of strong reading skills turns out to be greatest for students with strong domain knowledge.*
>
> -Marilyn Jager Adams, *Advancing Our Students' Language and Literacy, The Challenge of Complex Texts*

What is Coherence?

A coherent Core Knowledge implementation provides for a logical, orderly, and aesthetically consistent relationship of its parts, moving from one idea to the next, one unit to the next, in a logical fashion. Coherent planning and implementation typically include several of the following elements:

- A key consideration for coherence is whether students have the **pre-requisite knowledge and vocabulary** to understand a domain.
- When possible, addressing content, particularly history, in **chronological order** supports coherence. For instance, before students can discuss the importance of the Constitution, they should understand the events that led to its creation.
- Effective units or a sequence of units typically build upon content and concepts containing **prior knowledge** students have previously learned, helping them build on what they already know.
- **Moving from specific instances to general concepts,** or vice versa, supports coherence. For example, units move from micro to macro when studying the earth first, then the solar system. When studying the human body, units might progress from macro to micros, from body to cells.
- Planning for coherence also means integrating content to support understanding and retention. These **meaningful connections** also maximize instructional time. For example, by integrating geography with the events that occur in an area; integrating *Science Biographies* with the science concepts*;* and integrating *Sayings and Phrases* where they have a context or relevance in literature or non-fiction text, we are supporting learning and saving time.

Why Read-alouds Matter

Domain-based read-alouds provide an ideal vehicle for teaching content knowledge and fostering language skills.

- A student's ability to read and absorb information from print doesn't catch up to their listening comprehension ability until, on average, the late middle school years. Read-alouds leverage listening comprehension to expose children to both language and content.
- Written text, read aloud, exposes students to more rich and complex vocabulary and syntax than the more casual language of conversations, lectures, and class discussions.

- A coherently sequenced set of read-alouds about a particular domain of study provides repeated opportunities for exposure to domain-specific vocabulary and a wider variety of syntax and sentence structures.
- Using a domain-based unit format, content knowledge can be taught while simultaneously building listening comprehension and language skills.

The use of domain-based read-alouds is particularly helpful for imparting content knowledge in the early grades. However, because listening comprehension exceeds reading comprehension through the middle school years, read-alouds are an appropriate vehicle for lessons in all Core Knowledge grade levels. As students progress through the grades, the frequency of read-aloud based lessons decreases, but doesn't disappear completely.

Learn More

Developing a thoughtful and coherent implementation to maximize the benefits of Core Knowledge requires commitment and rigor on the part of an entire school community. The Core Knowledge Foundation assists schools in this process in a variety of ways.

Reading

Appendix A of the Core Knowledge Sequence: Why Listening and Learning Are Critical to Reading Comprehension

Advancing Our Students' Language and Literacy, the Challenge of Complex Texts by Marilyn Jager Adams (*American Educator,* Winter 2010)

The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3 by Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley (*American Educator*, Spring 2003)

The Knowledge Deficit: Closing the Shocking Education Gap for American Children by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

The Making of Americans: Democracy and Our Schools by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

Why Knowledge Matters: Rescuing Our Children from Failed Educational Theories by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

See *https://www.coreknowledge.org/about-us/e-d-hirsch-jr/articles-e-d-hirsch-jr/* to find articles by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

See *https://www.coreknowledge.org/our-approach/knowledge-based-schools/case-content-rich-curriculum/* to find additional articles that make the case for a content-rich curriculum

Other

https://www.coreknowledge.org/our-approach/

See *https://www.coreknowledge.org/our-schools/core-knowledge-schools/* to find a Core Knowledge School of Distinction near you.

Planning and Communication

Successful implementation of Core Knowledge doesn't just happen. It is the product of careful planning and open communication. Crucial to a successful implementation is a well-coordinated set of documents that include the curriculum plan, domain maps, and instructional plans for domain-based units including individual lesson plans. These documents are frequently consulted and guide teaching and learning on a daily basis.

A year-long **curriculum plan** is designed to provide an overview of the school's use of domain topics across the year. If the school uses comprehensive curricula developed by the Core Knowledge Foundation, teachers follow associated **pacing guides**. The plan, or pacing guide(s), are arranged by month or grading period, and documents Core Knowledge topics taught at each grade level. Pacing topics across the academic year is important because it:

- guides the coherent sequencing of domains to ensure that knowledge is building on knowledge;
- encourages consistency and communication among the school community;
- creates a basis for communication between the school, parents and the community.

When teachers design their **own** instructional units based on the *Core Knowledge Sequence:*

As a first step, teachers develop a more detailed **domain map**, which serves as the basis for design of lessons and units by defining what will be taught in each domain. For each domain, the map includes content and skill guidelines from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, associated state practices, cross-curricular connections, and other vital instructional information. This is a starting point for daily lessons. The domain maps are important because they:

- guide decisions regarding the depth of coverage for each domain;
- define learning and assessment goals for instruction and grade-level lesson planning;
- document cross-curricular connections and Core Knowledge titles (poetry, books, works of art and music, etc.) for each domain;
- explicitly define vocabulary associated with each domain;
- familiarize new teachers with Core Knowledge content.

Each domain map serves as a springboard to **domain-based unit** writing. The units are designed to maximize the connections between language, background knowledge, and reading comprehension by defining interactive units of study on a foundation of content-rich read-alouds in the earliest grades, increasing amounts of independent student reading over time, and related classroom discussion. Domain-based unit and lesson plans are important because they:

- detail comprehensive units that address the objectives of a particular domain of study;
- enable teachers to design lessons that build knowledge and foster language skills;
- include at least eight lessons so students focus on one topic long enough to build knowledge and acquire domain vocabulary.

Important Note: Teachers who implement **comprehensive** curricula developed by the Core Knowledge Foundation do not need to create corresponding domain maps or domain-based units. Materials, part of the Core Knowledge Curriculum Series, were created with elements of the map and domain-based unit in mind.

Schools can increase the effectiveness of staff and instruction by conducting the curriculum planning supported by these tools in the context of **collaborative planning**, in which the teachers and administrators seek opportunities for continuous improvement, to share learning, and for collaboration on solutions. Collaborative planning promotes the use of **common objectives, assessments, and criteria that ensure an equitable and equally rigorous experience in every classroom at the grade-level**.

Regularly scheduled collaborative planning time within and across grade levels supports successful and effective creation of these planning documents (see "7. Resources and Support Practices").

2.	Planning and Communication Practices
2.1	The school has developed a yearlong curriculum plan (or pacing guide), documenting monthly topics for each grade level, aligned with the *Core Knowledge Sequence*.
2.2	The school has developed domain maps that document specific content addressed for each teacher-created unit.
2.3	The planning tools (e.g., curriculum plan, pacing guides, domain maps) demonstrate how student learning builds coherently and cumulatively.
2.4	Teachers use the curriculum planning tools to guide their planning of classroom lessons and experiences.
2.5	Teacher-created domain-based units include overviews and lesson plans, which translate domain map content into measurable objectives.
2.6	Teachers develop domain-based units, comprised of individual lessons, to put the domain maps into action.
2.7	There is a transparent and immediate correlation between the yearlong curriculum plan (or pacing guides) and what actually takes place instructionally in each classroom.
2.8	An intentional focus on language and vocabulary development is apparent in the planning documents and classroom practices.
2.9	School administration ensures and protects regularly scheduled collaborative planning time within and across grade levels.

What Planning and Communication Practices Look Like in Action

A school is successful in establishing these practices when teachers have collaborated on the planning documents and each teacher's instructional activities are guided by them on a daily basis.

Teachers and staff in successful Core Knowledge schools have access to—and are able to articulate—the contents of their planning tools. Classroom lessons and experiences reflect the content and pacing of the documents.

Additionally, teachers and staff demonstrate a deliberate focus on language and vocabulary development through their instructional plans and classroom practices.

Learn More

Developing a thoughtful and coherent implementation to maximize the benefits of Core Knowledge requires commitment and rigor on the part of an entire school community. The Core Knowledge Foundation assists schools in this process in a variety of ways.

Reading

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The Knowledge Deficit: Closing the Shocking Education Gap for American Children by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

The Making of Americans: Democracy and Our Schools by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

Why Knowledge Matters: Rescuing Our Children from Failed Educational Theories by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

Understanding by Design, Expanded 2nd Edition by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe

Other

Core Knowledge Sequence Implementation Guide
https://www.coreknowledge.org/implementation/tools-resources/sequence-tools/

CKLA Implementation Guide
https://www.coreknowledge.org/implementation/tools-resources/ckla-tools/

Implementation as an Ongoing Process

Sustaining Core Knowledge implementation is an ongoing, school-wide effort. Effective Core Knowledge schools take steps to continually improve, motivate, and focus their Core Knowledge staff and community.

3.	Continuous Improvement Practices
3.1	The school revisits each of the curriculum planning documents on an annual basis to improve instruction.
3.2	The school routinely addresses administrative and staff transitions, so that newcomers receive timely support in Core Knowledge implementation.
3.3	The school actively participates in the Core Knowledge community.
3.4	The school maintains an active relationship with the Core Knowledge Foundation.
3.5	The school allocates funding to implement its school improvement plan.

What Continuous Improvement Practices Look Like in Action

A school is successful in establishing these practices when they approach each new school-year with the same excitement, level of commitment, attention to detail, and planning as their initial implementation. Successful schools document, throughout the year, opportunities for improvement in their presentation of Core Knowledge. They discuss successes and challenges on a weekly basis, and meet annually to refine their curriculum plan, based on their implementation experience.

Successful schools also participate actively in the larger community of Core Knowledge schools, using networking opportunities (Core Knowledge conferences and regional events, Core Knowledge blog, etc.) to learn from peers, share ideas, and advocate for Core Knowledge.

Finally, successful schools maintain an active relationship with the Core Knowledge Foundation, submitting an annual profile update, participating in professional development, collaborating with regard to implementation concerns, and sharing news of their school, staff, and student successes.

Learn More

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Reading

The Baldrige Program: Self-Assessment for Continuous Improvement by Sandra Byrne and Christine Schaefer (*Principal Magazine*, March/April 2006)

Other

http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/enter/education.cfm

https://www.coreknowledge.org/community/

Effective Teaching

An effective curriculum is wholly dependent upon effective teaching. A wide array of literature and tools are available defining characteristics of effective teaching. Best practices for teaching excellence include:

- **Mastery of subject matter** (Danielson, 2010; NBPTS, 1987; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008)
- Holding **high-expectations** for all students (Danielson, 2010; Dweck, 2007; NBPTS, 1987; Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008)
- **Intentional support of language development** (Pianta, LaParo, &Hamre, 2008)
- **Use of assessment to inform instruction** (Danielson, 2010; NBPTS, 1987; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000)
- **Scaffolding instruction** to meet individual needs, including provide **targeted feedback** to students to further **shape their learning** (NBPTS, 1987; Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000)
- Ability to construct lessons that provide **opportunities for students to apply knowledge in higher order situations** (Pianta, LaParo, &Hamre, 2008; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000)

4.	Effective Teaching Practices
4.1	Teachers demonstrate mastery of Core Knowledge subject matter.
4.2	Teachers demonstrate knowledge of language development.
	4.2a Teachers recognize the importance of, and their lessons demonstrate attention to, the connection between language, background knowledge, and reading comprehension.
	4.2b Instruction in oral language (listening and speaking) precedes instruction in written language (reading and writing)
	4.2c Instruction demonstrates an intentional focus on vocabulary development through repeated implicit exposure
4.3	Teachers use pedagogical practices generally associated with quality instruction.
	4.3a Teachers use assessment to inform instruction.
	4.3b Teachers provide scaffolding to meet individual students' needs.
	4.3c Teachers provide feedback to shape and guide students' learning.
	4.3d Instruction includes opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking
	4.3e Instruction supports engagement of students.
	4.3f Instruction provides opportunity for student practice.
	4.3g Instruction sets high expectations for all students.
4.4	Early literacy instruction includes the teaching of specific, sequential phonics based decoding skills.
4.5	Instruction in mathematics is guided by a program that emphasizes computational mastery as well as a systematic approach to building deep conceptual understanding of mathematics topics.

What Effective Teaching Practices Look Like in Action

A school is successful in meeting these practices when there is clear demonstration of effective, age or grade-appropriate teaching strategies and professional development plans and actions designed to refine teacher practices in these areas. Successful teachers recognize that Core Knowledge implementation goes beyond mere coverage of Core Knowledge topics and requires a focus on effective language and vocabulary development. These teachers proactively and intentionally plan to meet both content objectives and language development objectives in a manner that builds conceptual knowledge and uses the content as the basis for critical thinking and problem solving opportunities.

Additionally, effective Core Knowledge teachers use pedagogical practices that are generally associated with quality instruction. These include, but are not limited to, ongoing use of assessment to guide instruction, scaffolding instruction to differentiate for individual learner needs, providing feedback that goes beyond praise to guide student learning, and the use of

engaging activities that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking.

Finally, effective teachers recognize that the *Core Knowledge Sequence* calls for attention to both reading and mathematics skills in a manner that is both specific and sequential. These teachers further recognize that not all commercial classroom products and materials are organized with the specificity and coherence called for by Core Knowledge. These teachers implement coherent reading and math programs of proven effectiveness.

Learn More

Developing a thoughtful and coherent implementation to maximize the benefits of Core Knowledge requires commitment and rigor on the part of an entire school community. The Core Knowledge Foundation assists schools in this process in a variety of ways.

Reading

A Framework for Teaching: Components of Professional Practice by Charlotte Danielson

Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (K-3), by Robert Pianta, Karen LaParo, and Bridget Hamre

Classroom Assessment Scoring System™(preschool), by Robert Pianta, Karen LaParo, and Bridget Hamre

Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Third Edition, by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp

The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners by Carol A. Tomlinson

Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale Revised (ECERS-R) by Debby Cryer, Thelma Harms, and Cathy Riley

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck

The Skillful Teacher: Building Your Teaching Skills by Jon Saphier, Mary Ann Haley-Speca, and Robert Gower

Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do by the National Board for Professional Teaching Practices®, available at https://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/

Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom by Daniel T. Willingham

Strong Leadership

Effective school leadership ensures that there are both a clear vision and concrete plans for organizational growth and success. Using the vision and plans, with a results oriented focus, strong leaders set direction, develop human capital, and thoughtfully consider how internal and external processes and relationships can be improved.

5.	Leadership Practices
5.1	The school has established and disseminated a clear and focused mission.
5.2	The school's mission is consistent with the philosophy and mission of Core Knowledge.
5.3	School administration, staff, and community can articulate the school's mission.
5.4	The school has a plan in place to advance its vision and make continual improvements to its practices.
5.5	The school has appointed a Core Knowledge coordinator.
5.6	School administration provides resources and support to allow the Core Knowledge coordinator to perform the responsibilities of the role.
5.7	School administration and the Core Knowledge coordinator provide strong instructional leadership.
5.8	The school has a system for assessing, recording, and analyzing student learning and school effectiveness.
5.9	The school uses assessment data to improve instructional practices, student outcomes, and teacher effectiveness.
5.10	The school has a system/plan for evaluating and fostering the professional growth of its staff.
5.11	The school provides support for professional communities and collaborative teams.

What Leadership Practices Look Like in Action

A school is successful in demonstrating these practices when the mission and vision that guide the school and its activities are aimed at ensuring educational excellence and equity for all children.

The plans and actions of these schools demonstrate a focus on continuous improvement of instructional practices, by all staff, for all students. A well-formed and integrated system of assessment and data collection guides planning, instruction, student intervention and professional development of staff.

Instructional leadership, as modeled by both the Core Knowledge coordinator and the principal, is apparent throughout the staff. These schools have in place resources, tools and processes that guide and support instructional improvements. These include, but are not limited to, collaborative planning time for teachers at each grade level, professional growth plans for each teacher, and opportunities for teachers to benefit from coaching and modeling.

Learn More

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Reading

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You by John C. Maxwell

Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation by Lawrence W. Lezotte

The Daily Disciplines of Leadership: How to Improve Student Achievement, Staff Motivation, and Personal Organization by Douglas B. Reeves

Leadership for Differentiating Schools & Classrooms by Carol Ann Tomlinson and Susan Demirsky Allan

Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck

The Skillful Leader: Confronting Mediocre Teaching by Alexander D. Platt, Caroline E. Tripp, Wayne R. Ogden and Robert G. Fraser

What We Know About Successful School Leadership by K.A. Leithwood & C. Riehl

Other

Core Knowledge Leadership Institute

Core Knowledge Conferences & Regional Events

Community Involvement

Community involvement is a fundamental factor of successful schools. Continued growth and success relies upon common vision and mission. When parents are engaged in their child's education and home-school connections are strong:

- students are **more likely to graduate** from high school (Englund, Egeland, & Collins, 2008);
- students are **more likely to remain engaged in their education** as they progress through the middle and high school years (Furger, 2008);
- there are **positive effects on achievement** in math, reading, and science, attendance, behavior, homework completion, course credits earned, parent-child discussions about postsecondary education plans, and other indicators of success in school (Catsambis, 2001; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Sheldon 2004; Simon, 2004).

6.	Community Involvement Practices
6.1	The school community demonstrates an understanding of and commitment to the Core Knowledge philosophy.
6.2	The school ensures that the curriculum plan and domain maps are available to teachers and parents.
6.3	School administration and staff foster positive home-school connections.
6.4	School administration and staff solicit feedback from teachers, parents, students and the community.
6.5	The school fosters effective communication and relationships with and among its community members.
6.6	The school fosters effective communication and relationships with other area schools, particularly those that feed into or out from the Core Knowledge school.

What Community Involvement Practices Look Like in Action

Successful schools are proactive in fostering a shared understanding of vision and mission that fully integrates Core Knowledge within the school, students' homes, and the community at large. Within effective schools, teachers, staff, and students share responsibility for advancing the vision and mission. Effective schools seek appropriate partnerships with businesses, social service agencies, and other organizations whose purposes are consistent with the school's mission.

Learn More

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Reading

School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools by Joyce Epstein (2010)

What Your ___ Grader Needs to Know (Core Knowledge Foundation)

Resources and Support

Effective schools provide the resources and support teachers need to be effective in the classroom.

7.	Resources and Support Practices
7.1	The school allocates funding to purchase (or download and print) all instructional components of CK adopted program for teachers/students that will be using it.
7.2	The school allocates funding for classroom resources to support Core Knowledge topics.
7.3	The school allocates funding for library resources to support Core Knowledge topics.
7.4	The school has a system/plan for storing and cataloging shared resources that support Core Knowledge topics within and across grade levels.
7.5	The school allocates funding to ensure that teachers and administrators receive Core Knowledge professional development specific to CK materials (as needed).

What Resources and Support Practices Look Like in Action

A school is successful in meeting these practices when they acquire and maintain all core instructional resources needed for implementation of a program (or multiple) in the Core Knowledge curriculum series. Successful schools budget annually for both new and replacement materials to support their Core Knowledge implementation.

Supplemental materials are selected for their quality, factual accuracy, rich domain-specific vocabulary, complex language, and diversity.

Learn More

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Other

https://www.coreknowledge.org/store/

Core Knowledge Sequence

Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)

Core Knowledge History and Geography (CKHG)

Core Knowledge Science (CKSci)

Core Knowledge Teacher Handbook

Core Knowledge Grade-Level Starter Kits

https://www.coreknowledge.org/curriculum/download-curriculum/

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Third Party Resources:

https://www.coreknowledge.org/implementation/enhancing-practice/

Teacher Created-Resources:

https://www.coreknowledge.org/community/teacher-workroom/