



CCSS and Education Policy

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History of Standards

- 1989 agreement between National Governors Association and White House
- States would each adopt and promote standards with federal assistance (both in terms of funding and guidance)
- State standards are incorporated into federal legislation with NCLB in 2001

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS were developed in response to the failure of the standards
- Partnership of the National Governors Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, Gates Foundation
- Not national standards, but shared state standards, which means potentially 50 sets of educational policies

Federal Role

- No role in the development of the standards
- However, the Department of Education used Race to the Top to promote adoption of the standards
- Also, provided \$350 million for the development of tests
- Many assumed that reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act would provide some kind of assistance (but that hasn't happened)

Underestimated Challenge

- The writing and adoption of the standards was remarkable in its speed and quality
- Yet, states (or feds) have not stepped in with policies or supports to match the standards
- It will be very difficult to succeed with these standards without big shifts in policy and funding

Big Changes to ELA

- More challenging texts to teach reading (both higher grade-level text levels and reductions in amount of out-of-level teaching)
- Greater use of informational texts to teach reading (particularly in primary grades and in secondary English)
- Increased emphasis on close reading (or critical reading)
- Greater attention to argument and evidence
- More writing about reading
- Increased emphasis on disciplinary literacy (science, technical subjects, social studies, history)
- Enhanced role of technology intermixed throughout the standards

Independent Estimates of Costs

- The states did not have to pay for the development of the standards, nor the development of the tests
- But the costs of implementation are high
- Pioneer Foundation: \$16 billion
- Fordham Foundation: \$3-12 billion
- But these estimates leave out key costs and underestimate the amount of change that will be needed to implement successfully

Professional Development

- Professional development and materials costs are going to be higher than what has been estimated
- Fordham is correct that some of the costs of professional development can be reduced through shared electronic delivery (but which states are involved in such sharing at this time?)
- The changes teachers are being asked to make are not just informational in nature (they will require that teachers practice with guidance) – more painstaking than imagined in the cost analyses

Professional Development (cont.)

- Teaching teachers to guide students to read more challenging text successfully will require substantial investments (teachers aren't used to looking at text in these terms)
- Teaching teachers to guide close reading will also be a big investment (one good model is Junior Great Books, but the numbers of teachers who know such models is very small)

Assessment

- PARRC and Smarter Balanced will be more expensive assessments and the formative versions of them will add considerable expense
- Technology infrastructure required by these tests (exists in some districts, but very uneven and in districts that have invested heavily, they are often not prepared for grades 3-12)

Remedial Support

- Currently, remedial supports are based on a system in which approximately 20-30% of kids do poorly (i.e., don't meet standards)
- We provide remediation efforts aimed at providing some services to students in the bottom quartile
- The new tests are likely to have failure rates more like 75% and there will be pressure to provide educational supports for the students in the middle

States Aren't Prepared

- Fordham Foundation is correct that states are already spending money on professional development, instructional materials, technology, and assessment and that these expenditures can be devoted to CCSS implementation
- But they grossly underestimate (or simply set aside) the costs of new assessments, professional development, remediation, and technology infrastructure
- Because each state is autonomous they do not have strong histories of working with other states to reduce costs (e.g., certification, professional development)

Costs are Only Part of It

- Teacher and principal education policy (e.g., certification requirements)
- Curriculum materials policy (e.g., adoption policies)
- Accountability policy (e.g., state graduation exams)
- Research directions

Conclusions

- CCSS are exceptional in their scope and will likely have a big impact on educational attainment in the U.S.
- Will only work if appropriately funded and supported by policy infrastructure to ensure that it is implemented reasonably well
- This policy infrastructure does not exist at this time and the federal government can't easily play this role