

# What Can We Learn from the Common Core Standards in the Early Language Learning Classroom?

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## INTRODUCTION

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the National Standards for Foreign Language Education have several areas of commonality. First of all, both standards have the goal that all students, by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade, will have the skills they need to be successful world citizens. The introduction to the Common Core document spells out the thinking behind it and shows the immediate connection to world languages.

“We are living in a world without borders. To meet the realities of the 21st century global economy and maintain America’s competitive edge into the future, we need students who are prepared to compete, not only with their American peers, but with students from all across the globe for the jobs of tomorrow.” (Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education, 2008, p. 1)

Secondly, the CCSS and the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning contain similar strands. The Common Core document organizes the strands according to Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. These same four strands are found in the National Standards for Learning Languages document in the Communication standard which lists three types of communication ability:

- Interpretive communication--listening, reading or viewing
- Interpersonal communication which mainly focuses on listening and speaking (but could include reading and writing depending on the nature of the spontaneous communication task)
- Presentational communication--speaking or writing.

The CCSS align outcomes with various grade levels while the National Standards for Learning Languages align outcomes with various proficiency levels. In short, as language educators we are strongly connected to the CCSS since we share the goal of preparing all of our students to be world ready with the high levels of proficiency and skills that they need in order to be successful.

As we look at how the Common Core State Standards intersect with students in K-5 language programs, we must take into account the disparity in proficiency levels since the CCSS are designed for native speakers of English who are functioning at much higher levels. Proficiency of students in world language classes varies according

to the length of time that they have been learning the language, and the types of activities in which they have been engaged. Students in K-5 programs, beginning in kindergarten or first grade, that meet at least three times per week for at least 30 minutes would, at a minimum, reach the Novice High proficiency level by the end of fifth grade. According to ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, here is what students at this level are able to do:

Novice-level speakers can communicate short messages on highly predictable, everyday topics that affect them directly. They do so primarily through the use of isolated words and phrases that have been encountered, memorized, and recalled. Novice-level speakers may be difficult to understand even by the most sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to non-native speech. (ACTFL, 2012, p.9)

Even though students in world language classes are operating at much lower proficiency levels, *they are still able to work toward the same academic goals*. The CCSS demand that all students have an engaging, meaningful, and challenging learning experience. We must work to ensure that all learners in world language classes have the same types of experiences. Students at the novice proficiency range are able to benefit from cognitively engaging activities that demand higher order thinking.

## THE COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

The Common Core English Language Arts Standards describe what students by the end of Grade 12 should look like:

“They demonstrate independence. Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker’s key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.” (2010, p. 7)

Just as the National Standards for Language Learning challenge our profession to

focus on what students are able to do with the language rather than what they know about the vocabulary and grammar of the language, the CCSS present challenges to the way that literacy in English has traditionally been taught in that they focus on moving from a knowledge-driven curriculum to a skills-based curriculum. Billings and Roberts make the transition clear when they say: “... the Common Core Standards assume that teachers are ultimately teaching students to think—the most difficult and important literacy skill of all.” (2012, p. 72)

The Common Core standards highlight three key areas of shift: (Alberti, 2012)

- Building knowledge through content-rich non fiction
- Reading and writing grounded in evidence
- Regular practice with complex texts and academic language

Teachers are being asked to focus on developing deep comprehension skills in addition to the focus on phonics and other basic skills that had been the hallmark of No Child Left Behind requirements. The new CCSS ask teachers to place greater emphasis on rich and varied texts so that students can be engaged in reading and learning at the same time. Listed below are the ten anchor standards for reading. These anchor standards have been aligned with the National Standards for Learning Languages in a document entitled Alignment of the National Standards for Learning Languages with the CCSS. (ACTFL, 2012). [http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Aligning\\_CCSS\\_Language\\_Standards\\_v6.pdf](http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Aligning_CCSS_Language_Standards_v6.pdf)

## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING

**Key ideas and details:**

1. 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.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

**Craft and structure**

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and

larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

**Integration of knowledge and ideas**

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

**Range of reading and level of text complexity**

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

**HOW DO THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS CONNECT TO EARLY LANGUAGE LEARNING?**

The literacy skills that are found in the common core are the same skills that can be practiced and reinforced in the world language classroom. Young Learners (except for those in immersion programs) have already made the connection between meaning and written symbols in their first language and transfer the skills they have acquired in their first language to their new language.

In classrooms for young learners, many teaching activities are oral activities focused on listening and speaking. We know that oral language provides the basis for both first and second-language reading and that meaningful reading experiences in both first and secondlanguage classrooms are dependent on the student's oral language comprehension in addition to the student's existing background knowledge and experience. In first as well as second language classrooms, children's listening comprehension outpaces their reading comprehension. As students develop their listening comprehension, they begin to make connections between oral language and the print that represents the words they know orally.

While in classrooms with native English speakers, many of the activities related to the Common Core will be accomplished through reading and writing, language teachers must remember that some of the common core skills can also be developed through listening. For example, the teachers read to students before they are able to do independent reading in the new language.

The literacy skills that students acquire in their first language (Cloud, Genesee and Hamayan, 2000) are the same skills that un-

derlie the 10 Common Core Reading Anchor Standards. Those skills are:

**Decoding:**

- sounding out the word
- recognizing a sight word
- using context

**Processing Text**

- directionality of text (not always left to right, as in English)
- capitalizing at the start of a sentence
- skimming, scanning, and using other previewing techniques
- using the title and illustrations to understand a passage

**Comprehending**

- identifying the main idea and important details
- predicting outcomes/anticipating events
- identifying story sequence
- summarizing and paraphrasing

**Critically Reading**

- discriminating between fact and opinion
- recognizing cause and effect

**Studying and Analyzing Literature**

- recognizing important feelings and motivations of characters
- identifying the conflict

Unfortunately the skills listed above have not always been a part of instruction for young learners. Just as the CCSS are a call to first language literacy programs to engage all students in cognitively engaging activities that involve higher order thinking, they are also a call to world language teachers of young learners to include and build on these skills. The article by Barnett and Martino (2012) elsewhere in this journal gives us a valuable blueprint of how we can work with some of these skills.

**WORKING WITH THE THREE KEY AREAS OF SHIFT IN THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

The CCSS contain three key areas of shift that were mentioned earlier: 1) Building knowledge through content-rich non fiction, 2) Reading and writing grounded in evidence, and 3) Regular practice with complex texts and academic language.

These three shifts are exemplified by the three questions in the Fulton-Archer (2012) article elsewhere in this journal:

- What do students read?
- What do they do with what they read?
- At what level do they read?

We will examine each area and how it relates to early language learning.

**First Shift: Building knowledge through content-rich non-fiction**

**Question: What do students read?**

According to the first shift, there needs to be a greater emphasis on informational texts at all levels. The reason for this is that

if students are to become good readers, they must have background in the world that surrounds them. They must build knowledge through reading both fiction and content-rich non-fiction that touches on other areas of the curriculum such as social studies, and science. Studies have shown currently less than 10% of what is read in elementary school literacy programs is non-fiction. (Duke, 2004, cited in Alberti, 2012 p. 25)

The CCSS recommendations for the percentage of fiction and non-fiction texts are:

- 50% literary texts and 50% informational texts at fourth grade
- 45% literary texts and 55% informational texts at eighth grade
- 30% literary texts and 70% informational texts at twelfth grade

Currently, in many elementary school literacy programs the large amounts of time devoted to literacy blocks has often crowded out the time for science and social studies. In order to rectify this, the CCSS emphasize that the time devoted to literacy must now include connections to other subject areas.

**Connections with ELL Programs**

The CCSS recommendations for working with high quality fiction and increased emphasis on non-fiction certainly apply to all language programs for young learners! First of all, we can find interesting and engaging stories that provide a meaningful center and focus to our instruction. The Common Core standards suggest many types of texts fables, myths, folktales, poetry, stories and short plays as well as short articles and narratives. Appendix B in the CCSS document lists children's books that could be used with younger readers. Some of the books listed in the Kindergarten and Grade One category:

**Stories**

- Minarik, Else Holmelund. *Little Bear*
- Eastman, P. D. *Are You My Mother?*
- Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together*

**Informational Texts**

- Bulla, Clyde Robert. *A Tree Is a Plant*
- Alike. *My Five Senses*
- Hurd, Edith Thacher. *Starfish*
- "Garden Helpers." *National Geographic Young Explorers*

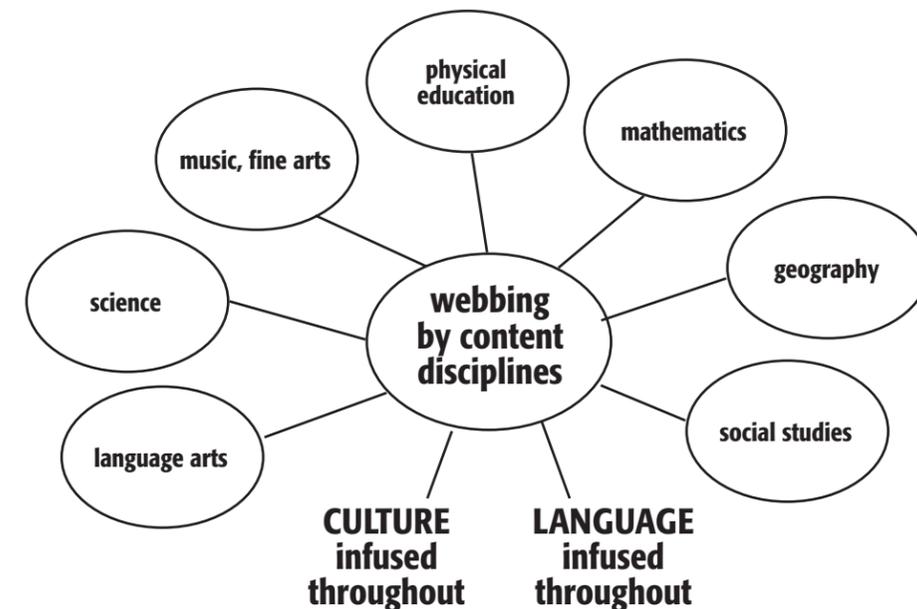
These stories were picked because, in addition to having interesting and engaging narratives, they also teach valuable lessons about life or the world we live in. Such stories, along with many others, can and should be used by K-5 language teachers because good fiction and non-fiction can function as the center of a thematic unit that enhances language proficiency and makes connections to universal culture and the curriculum.

This implies that, for early language learning programs, we must be very careful to use stories, texts and activities that are not only interesting and engaging but that also can offer valuable content and cultural connections. If we are to contribute to the Common Core State Standards, we must take very seriously the need to use texts that are deep with emotional learning and/or content from the regular curriculum and/or universal cultural connections-- cultural connections not necessarily specific only to the culture of the language that is being taught.

When language students are exploring topics that have curricular connections, they will be engaged in what is described as the first shift emphasized in the Common Core State Standards-- emphasis on informational texts. When students are exposed to learning beyond the vocabulary and functions of the language itself, they are building knowledge through content-rich activities. One way to ensure that our activities are content-rich is to organize our instruction around thematic units. As we plan thematic units, we can use a brainstorming web such as the one below that includes other content area subjects. When we plan units in this way, it enables us to think of activities that might otherwise be overlooked and provides a rich source of ideas for the unit. Of course, webbing around subject content topics also provides valuable links to the regular curriculum and supports content-related instruction.

Thematic units are an engaging way to organize instruction for young learners. By their very nature, thematic units build the types of skills that are mandated in the Common Core State Standards. Here, according to Curtain and Dahlberg (2010), are some of the reasons why thematic units make a direct connection to the Common Core:

1. Thematic planning makes instruction more comprehensible because the theme creates a meaningful context.
2. Thematic planning changes the instructional focus from the language itself to the use of language to achieve meaningful goals. In thematic instruction, we focus on using the language to communicate something related to a theme, rather than repeating words in isolation with no connection to the classroom or the student. There is a reason to communicate a message.
3. Thematic instruction involves the students in real language use in a variety of situations, modes, and text types. Thematic



instruction gives students the opportunity to use language in a variety of situations including simulations of cultural experiences. A theme lends itself to all three of the communication modes: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Text types, within a thematic unit, can range from preparing and reading poetry to reading headlines to creating or listening to a description to participating in a conversation to listening to a play.

4. Thematic instruction involves activities or tasks that engage the learner in complex thinking and more sophisticated use of language. Even though learners may have very little language at their disposal, they are still capable of using that language in a complex and sophisticated way, if they have the opportunity and the interest. An engaging theme built around endangered animals, for example, led one student to use simple vocabulary to make a very sophisticated statement. On a picture of a leopard, the student wrote the caption "No soy un abrigo" (I am not a coat). This is a far more sophisticated and meaningful use of the verb "to be" than the obvious statement "I am a boy" or "I am a girl." We are connecting to the common core when we ask our students to deal with complex topics even though their language level may be simple.

5. The thematic unit provides many opportunities for students to hear and use language in a variety of meaningful contexts. We have learned from brain research that manipulation of vocabulary and grammar in a drill setting is less efficient than the meaningful use of language in rich contexts. Stu-

dents need contexts for extended listening, for conversations in which real information is exchanged, and for oral and written presentations of information and ideas. Fragmented language is not as memorable as language learned in context—and it certainly isn't as usable.

**Second Shift: Reading and writing grounded in evidence**

**Question: What do they do with what they read?**

The second shift emphasizes developing students' abilities to critically analyze both informational and literary texts at increasing levels of complexity. This requires reading and writing to be grounded in using evidence from texts. The Common Core State Standards ask students to carefully analyze and prioritize information from texts rather than simply answer questions from the perspective of their prior knowledge or experience. They also focus on evidence rather than student experience and opinion underlying speaking and writing. (Alberti 2012, p .25)

**Connections with Early Language Learning Programs**

Calkins, Ehrenworth & Lehman (2012, p. 9) indicate that the Common Core State Standards emphasize much higher-level comprehension skills than previous standards. They state that many classrooms have coasted on low-level reading skills and quickly need to "get on board" with high-level reading skills. In light of the increased complexity and the increased results that are being asked of literacy skills in the first language, it is important that we too look

at the complexity of what we are offering in our early language learning programs.

It is important to ask if we are “coasting” on low-level skills rather than getting on board with high-level skills in our language classes. At the simplest level, this can mean we must ask if we are focusing on isolated words rather than chunks of language in phrases and sentences. It is extremely important that students are challenged to listen to and to produce chunks of language rather than being asked to produce disconnected and isolated words. We must ask ourselves if we are building sufficient proficiency-oriented language skills according to the time that we have available to us. We must also ask if we are speaking the target language 90+ percent of the time and building students’ ability to use language rather than simply building their knowledge about the language.

We must examine our activities to see if they are demanding and engaging and will help students to process texts and to process their learning. The question that characterizes the second shift, what do students do with what they read? is intertwined with the question that characterizes the third shift: At what level do they read? Outlined below in the next section are instructional suggestions—working with concept organizers and working with thinking skills—that integrate the answer to both questions.

**Third Shift: Regular practice with complex texts and academic knowledge**

**Question: At what level do they read?**

According to the third shift, students need regular practice with academic language and complex texts. In order to understand complex materials, students need help in developing key academic vocabulary and understanding narrative and informational structures. Shifting toward more complex text requires much practice with close reading that, according to Boyles (2012, p 37), means “reading to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension, **Connections with Early Language Learning Programs**

The standards emphasize developing students’ abilities to analyze both informational and literary texts at increasing levels of complexity. All texts, both informational and narrative, are governed by text structures. In narrative texts, the overall structure consists of story structure or consists of an argument that the author proposes and supports. Texts also contain structures that indicate the basic relationships among ideas.

Understanding these relationships can help students understand the structure of complex texts. Also, we can deal with texts and with any learning activity at various levels of complexity. The first part of this section gives an example of working with concept organizers as a way to help students understand the relationship among ideas in many texts and the second part suggests using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy (Anderson. & Krathwohl, 2001) as way to increase the complexity of the lessons and activities we plan for students—a complexity that will enable them to meet the demands of the Common Core State Standards.

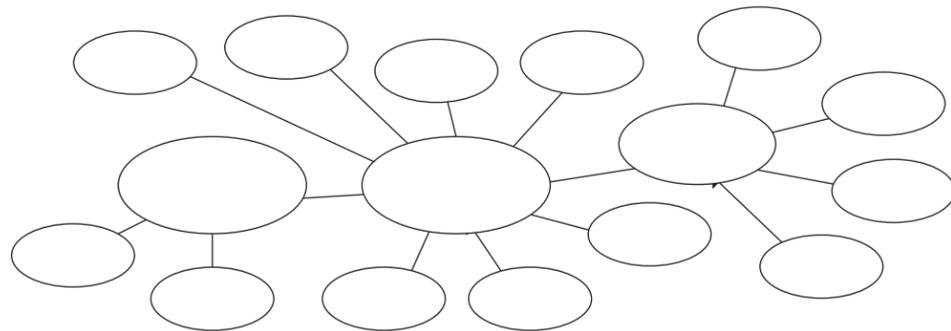
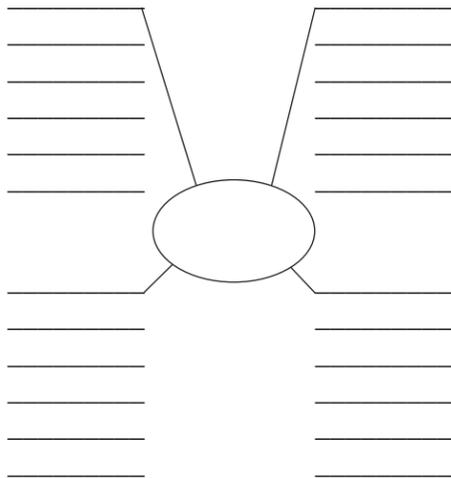
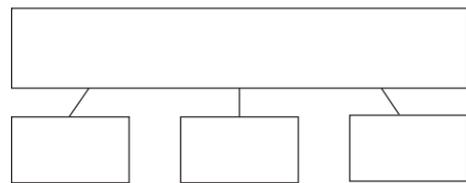
**WORKING WITH CONCEPT ORGANIZERS**

One way to support students in developing their skill with complex texts is to have them work with concept organizers showing the four basic relationships among ideas:

- addition of ideas: simple listing/mapping/webbing/clustering
- time sequence/chronology
- compare and contrast
- process/cause and effect

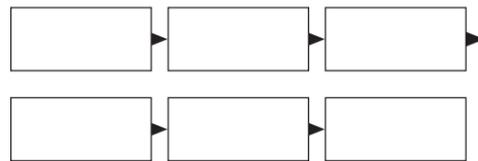
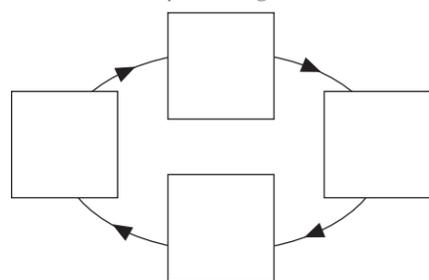
*Addition of Ideas: Simple Listing, Mapping, Webbing*

This type of relationship presents information or clarifies and categorizes information in a structured way. These organizers can be linear or non-linear depending on the relationships being described. They can be used to describe and list attributes or patterns or to organize information about specific events, settings, or people. They can organize information into general statements with supporting examples or clarify concepts relating to a word or phrase that represents entire classes of people, places, things, and events.



*Sequence/Chronology*

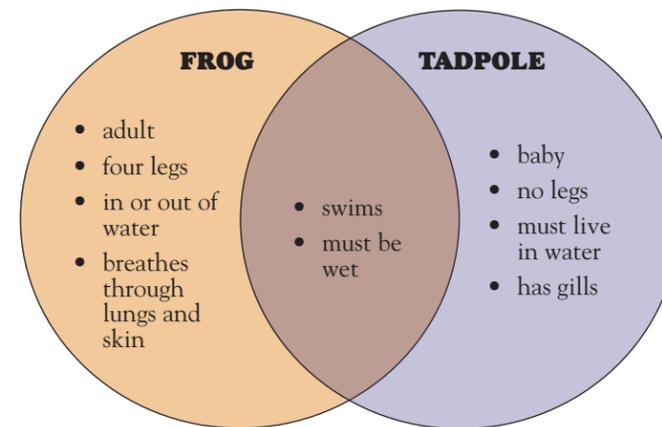
One idea occurs before, during or after another idea. This type of concept organizer categorizes information according to some type of sequence or chronology, as in a time line or a flowchart. Flowcharts can be linear or cyclical. A cycle flowchart shows how a series of events can produce the same results again and again, as with the water cycle or the life cycle of a butterfly or a frog



**Comparison and Contrast**

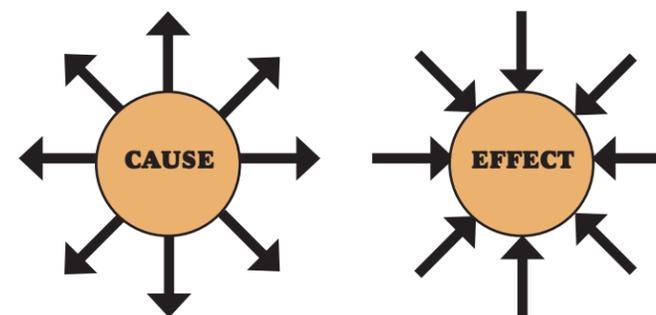
One idea goes with or does not go with another idea. A third way concept organizers can clarify relationships is by showing comparisons and contrasts. These types of organizers help students to display similarities and differences.

	Item 1	Item 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 2		
Attribute 3		



**Cause and Effect**

One idea causes another. This concept organizer shows the logical relationships between causes and effects. These organizers can be used to show relationships among events within a story, for example, or steps in a process. The causes and effects must be specifically labeled “cause” or “effect” in order to make the relationship clear.



**Working with Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy**

Close reading of demanding texts is described in the Common Core State Standards as a skill that is needed in order to produce students who are college and career ready. We can put this concept to work in the young learner classroom by focusing on the thinking skills outlined in Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy. Most educators are familiar with Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, first established in 1956. Anderson and Krathwohl revised and updated the taxonomy in 2001. The taxonomy was based on the idea that teachers need to prompt more complex thinking from their students

by asking better and deeper questions. Figures 1 and 2 show how various aspects of the taxonomy could help teachers of young learners connect to the complex skills demanded by the Common Core State Standards.

Figure 1 lists and defines the skills required at various levels of the taxonomy, and also delineates a series of questions that could be given to students in order to scaffold their thinking. As we look at the higher skills demanded by the top three levels—creating, evaluating and analyzing—and the lower levels of the chart—applying, understanding and remembering—we must be sure that we are finding ways to challenge our learners at the higher levels and not just at the lower levels.

Figure 2 gives some simple examples of how students at the novice level of proficiency could still work with complexity along the continuum of thinking. This chart shows how the thinking of young learners can be scaffolded even as they work with some basic fairy tales. The activities outlined here all directly connect to the Common Core requirements. Teachers can use these questions as they are working with any story.

**CONCLUSION**

We have examined the connection between the National Standards for Learning Languages and the Common Core State Standards. We have seen that there is overlap between the two standards in that the strands of both are related to listening, speaking, reading and writing at various levels of proficiency. We have looked, in a very general way, at the learning demands outlined by the new standards.

We have also seen several examples of how teachers of young learners can support the demands of the Common Core State Standards, and in doing so, increase the skills of their language students. If we are to truly produce students with 21<sup>st</sup> century world ready skills, we must be sure to challenge them with intrinsically interesting, cognitively engaging activities that are connected to global cultures. We must continue to strive to provide students with activities that will not only increase their language skills, but will also provide them with opportunities for complex learning.

**APPENDIX**

**Questions To Consider As We Examine Our Lessons To See if They are Connecting to the Expectations of The Common Core State Standards.**

- Are we working from high, clear and focused expectations?
- How can we build proficiency and carefully connect to what the students will be able to do and say as a result of the text or the activity that we are using?
- Are the materials we are using contributing, not only to proficiency, but also to knowledge and skills from other disciplines?
- Are our lessons and units deep and rich?
- Are we working, not only on our students’ language skills, but also on their thinking skills?
- Are we creating units of study with enduring understandings and essential questions that are interesting and engaging to students?
- Are we organizing our instruction around themes that offer the possibility of cultural and curricular skill-building connections?
- Are we demanding language chunks and language connectors from our students so that they are building a foundation that will easily enable them to move from one proficiency level to another?

**FIGURE 1: THINKING SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES IN BLOOM'S REVISED TAXONOMY**

SKILL	SAMPLE PRODUCTS	PURPOSE	QUESTIONS
<i>Creating</i>	Design, construct, plan, produce	Combine elements into a new pattern or product.	What ideas could you predict or infer from...? What ideas can you add to...? How would you create/design a new...? What might happen if you combined... with ...? What solutions would you suggest for...?
<i>Evaluating</i>	Check, critique, judge, hypothesize, conclude, explain	Judge or decide according to a set of criteria	Do you agree...? What do you think about...? What is the most important...? Prioritize... How would you decide about...? What criteria would you use to assess...?
<i>Analyzing</i>	Compare, organize, cite differences, deconstruct	Break down or examine information	What are the parts or features of ...? Classify ... according to... Outline/diagram/web... How does...compare/contrast with...? What evidence can you list for?
<i>Applying</i>	Implement, carry out, use, apply, show, solve	Apply knowledge to new situations	How is ... an example of...? How is ... related to...? Why is ... significant?
<i>Understanding</i>	Describe, explain, name, estimate, predict	Understand and interpret meaning	Retell.... in your own words. What is the main idea of ....?
<i>Remembering</i>	Recognize, list, describe, identify, retrieve	Memorize and recall facts	Who, what, when, how...? Describe...

**FIGURE 2: CRITICAL THINKING IN STORIES AND STORYTELLING USING BLOOM'S REVISED TAXONOMY**

CREATING	EVALUATING	ANALYZING	APPLYING	UNDERSTANDING	REMEMBERING
<i>Little Red Hen</i>					
Create another ending.	Predict what you think would have happened if they all had worked together	Compare the animals in the story.	Show with actions what Little Red Hen did with the wheat.	Explain why the others wouldn't help Little Red Hen.	List all the animals in the story. Recall what they said when the Little Red Hen asked for help.
<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i>					
Create a different story called Goldilocks and the three dragons.	Judge whether Goldilocks was bad or good and tell why.	Compare the story to real life. What could not have happened?	Demonstrate what Goldilocks would use if she came into your house.	Explain why Goldilocks liked Baby Bear's chair best.	Recall the items used by Goldilocks when she was in the bears' house.
<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>					
Create a new version of the story. Change the time to modern day.	Rank characters from best to worst, smartest to least smart, and most to least important.	Group the characters using according to good-bad, major-minor, wise-foolish	Illustrate the main idea of the story.	Describe and sequence the main events of the story.	Draw the characters from the story.
<i>Three Little Pigs</i>					
Prepare a new ending to the story "Three Little Pigs."	Choose the smartest pig. List three reasons why you chose that pig.	Classify the pigs' houses from best to worst according to cost, building time and strength.	Use model to demonstrate which house stood up the best.	Describe what each of pig's houses looks like.	Read the story and name all of the characters.

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**RESOURCES**

21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and World Language [http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Skills\\_Map/p21\\_worldlanguagesmap.pdf](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/Skills_Map/p21_worldlanguagesmap.pdf)

Common Core State Standards Initiative <http://www.corestandards.org>

State of Maryland Common Core Home Page <http://www.mdk12.org/instruction/curriculum/reading/index.html>

Where World Languages and the Common Core Intersect [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global\\_learning/2012/09/where\\_world\\_languages\\_and\\_the\\_common\\_core\\_intersect.htm](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global_learning/2012/09/where_world_languages_and_the_common_core_intersect.htm)

Educating for Global Competence: Preparing our Youth to Engage in the World. <http://asiasociety.org/files/book-globalcompetence.pdf>

Fulfilling the Promise of the Common Core State Standards- Moving from Adoption to Implementation to Sustainability <http://inservice.ascd.org/commoncore/moving-the-common-core-state-standards-from-adoption-to-implementation-to-sustainability/>

**Helena Curtain, Ph.D.** is an internationally known expert on second language teaching methodology, curriculum development, and bilingual immersion education. Her special interest is in teaching language to young learners. She is the co-author of *Languages and Children: Making the Match*, now in its fourth edition—a book used in universities throughout the United States for preparing language teachers to work in grades K-8. Dr. Curtain directed the English as a Second Language and World Language teacher preparation programs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for 10 years. Previously she coordinated the foreign language and ESL programs in grades K-12 in the Milwaukee Public Schools and taught at the elementary, middle school and high school levels. In the Milwaukee Public Schools she started three full immersion programs in German, Spanish and French and was one of the pioneers of the immersion movement in the United States. She has won several national awards including the *Two Way Immersion CABE Research on Bilingualism Award* in 2012. She has broad experience working with schools and school districts, teaching and conducting workshops throughout the United States and internationally in 30 countries.

