

Publishers' Criteria for Math

The new Publishers' Criteria for Mathematics has been released for use in selection of materials to support the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics. One of most important and helpful parts of the new criteria is located in the Appendix. There are two items – an article entitled The Structure is the Standards by Phil Daro, William McCallum and Jason Zimba and a three page Sample Rubric. These two documents provide a strategic starting point to have discussions about the Math Publishers' Criteria and the Math Common Core Standards. You can access the entire document at http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Summer%202012_FINAL.pdf

This is a revision of the K-8 criteria with a set of very important changes that were added after feedback was gathered from stakeholders. Some of the changes include:

- More precise guidance on how much time should be devoted to the "major work" of the standards, and
- A differentiation between the K-2 level and the middle grades.

The criteria's emphasis is on the three core dimensions of the math standards:

- Focus;
- Coherence; and
- Rigor.

In the dimension of Focus – the emphasis is on addressing fewer math topics in greater depth. Jason Zimba said the criteria are most explicit when it comes to the issue of focus. "Focus is so crucial to get right," he said. "Those criteria are generally pragmatic and objective and meant to be easy to apply."

On Coherence, the document explains that this concept is about "making math make sense." It explains: "Mathematics is not a list of disconnected

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tricks or mnemonics. It is an elegant subject in which powerful knowledge results from reasoning with a small number of principles."

Most importantly in the area of Rigor, the publishers' criteria document articulates a three-pronged definition centered on:

- Conceptual understanding of key math concepts;
- Procedural skill and fluency; and
- Applications of mathematics.

"Rigor isn't a code word for just one of these three," the document says. "Rather, it means equal intensity in all three." It adds that "to date, curricula have not always been balanced in their approach to these three aspects of rigor."

The purpose of the criteria is to provide the educational field some basic standards upon which materials should be evaluated. The document states that ""Materials must give especially careful treatment to the domains, clusters, and standards including their interconnections and their applications," which is represented with a table. For example, the table spotlights all three specific standards in a section on reasoning quantitatively and using units to solve problems. In algebra, it highlights every domain in the standards as containing widely applicable prerequisites, but identifies as "especially important" the first domain, focused on "seeing structure in expressions."

If you would like more information, please contact:

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