

Capture the Core

A Publication of the
Illinois State Board
of
Education Statewide
System of Support
Content Specialists

Sixth Grade through
Eighth Grade

Volume 6 Issue 1

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Teaching with Small Groups Supports Greater Learning

The beginning of a new school year is steeped in promise. Setting the proper tone and expectations can make for a much smoother and positive year.

Establishing small group expectations early, and repeating these expectations often allows educators time to work with smaller groups of students on a variety of learning opportunities.

Research shows that the more we can apply formative assessment strategies in the classroom, the greater likelihood for learning to increase.

Older student need to have a routine established just as much as younger students.

Tips for Introducing Group Work Expectations

1. Establish student and teacher jobs while in small groups. (Students are responsible for their staying focused on their learning and controlling their behavior. Teacher is responsible to work with students)
2. Teach, model and practice the expected behaviors.
3. Start off with a short time and extend as on task time increases.
4. Be patient as students practice their new behaviors for learning in your classroom.

Back to School Issue

This is the 6th year of Capture the Core ! We love supporting our state's outstanding educators with our monthly newsletter.

For our first edition of the 2017-2018 school year we are focused on supporting a great start to the school year. On the various pages you will find wonderful ideas to use in your classroom to kick off the year.

Supporting and Engaging Families will be our focus in our next issue. Keep an eye out for it in September and thank you for all your hard work.

Have a great year!

Inside this issue:

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Back to School Additional Support

Looking for even more back to school ideas? Look no further than our website:

[Illinois Classrooms in Action](http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org)

Here you will find multi-page

booklets for each subject area available for download, as well as many other ideas to support you in your classroom.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Illinois Classrooms in Action website. It features a navigation bar with 'HOME' and 'Back to School' links. A main heading reads 'Welcome to Illinois Classrooms in Action!' followed by a brief description of the site's purpose. Below this are several subject-specific buttons: English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Science, Career Tech, Fine Arts, and PE/Health. Social media icons for Facebook and Twitter are also visible.

ELA Support for the New School Year

Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois Literacy in Action

Administrators Home
Literacy Leadership Home
Librarians Home

SEARCH

Illinois Literacy In Action

Welcome to the New Illinois Literacy In Action Website (ILIA)! Our focus is on all things Literacy by grade level for teachers, literacy leaders, curriculum directors and administrators. Start here buttons on each page allow for visitors to view, tools and resources specific to their needs. Please provide us with feedback by scrolling to the bottom and selecting the feedback link!**

**PLEASE NOTE WE ARE STILL UPDATING CONTENT AND NOT ALL LINKS MAY BE ACTIVE. We appreciate your understanding! Please bookmark the new site name.

Start Here Video Guides

Grade Specific Literacy Resources

K-5 Start Here
6-12 Start Here
Lit Leadership

Kindergarten
Third Grade
Sixth Grade
Ninth-Tenth

First Grade
Fourth Grade
Seventh Grade
Eleventh-Twelfth

Second Grade
Fifth Grade
Eighth Grade
Content Areas

Teacher Resources for Parents
Reaching All Learners Resources
Technology Integration

Hover in lower right to make full screen

Rigor is not defined by the text – it comes from what students do. It is not a standards across a curriculum – it is individual to each student’s needs. It is not quantified by how much gets crammed into a school day – it is measured in depth of understanding. Rigor is a result, not a cause. Edutopia

EXCITING NEWS: The ISBE ELA Content Specialists have launched a new website that replaces Writing Matters. It is titled:

www.illinoisliteracyinaction.org

Visitors can still access all the same tools and resources that were on Writing Matters by clicking their grade level and selecting the writing button. The new focus for the site is to include tools and resources

for all of the literacy strands in one place. A short video on the home page explains the resources and tools that can be found on the site and how the site is organized. Visit the “Start Here Video Guides” to see what’s new!

Teachers know that literacy is not broken into isolated strands but seamlessly woven from one to the other as instructional tasks are

formed. This site is to support educators with this endeavor. Also new to the site are grade level “Essentials” which are new “must have” resources. These items are located on each grade level page. In addition, a Lesson Design button has been added to each grade level page that houses many sites with standards-based lessons, units and curricula.

ELA Back to School Guide Available

The ISBE ELA Content Specialists have crafted a “Back to School Guide” that provides a mini tour of the new literacy website and the variety of tools to support each grade level teacher throughout the year. Of special note is the new “Essentials” area on each grade level home page. This area of the site will provide teachers with guidance in

standards, tasks, and assessments.

One of the Essentials is the “Guidance for Designing Literacy Tasks Guide” which provides teachers with steps to build classroom tasks that include the standards as well as the evidence statements used to develop PARCC questions. This provides

teachers practical support when creating lessons and units throughout the year.

The home page of the website also includes resources for all Content Area Classrooms.

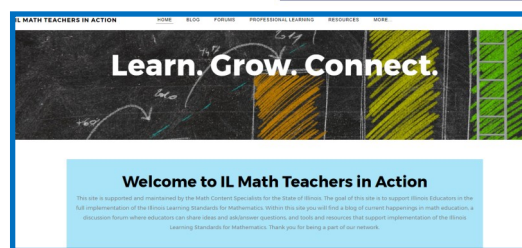
The ELA Back to School Guide can be accessed by clicking on the following link: www.ilclassroomsinaction.org

Back to School Packet for Mathematics

The math content specialists have compiled a Back to School Packet for educators to help them make this school year the best yet. The packet includes tools to measure the implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards for Mathematics, resources to strengthen your teaching practice, and materials to supplement your curriculum.

The math content specialists would also like you to be aware of our new website, IL Math Teachers in Action (mathteachersinaction.org). The goal of this site is to support Illinois Educators in the full implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards for Mathematics. Within this site you will find a blog of current happenings in math education, a

discussion forum where educators can share ideas and ask/answer questions, and tools and resources that support implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards for Mathematics.



Week of Inspirational Maths #3

Jo Boaler and youcubed.org have released a third [Week of Inspirational Maths!](#) What better way to start the school year than establishing and nurturing a growth mindset in your students. This Week of Inspirational Maths

includes a full week of lesson plans for [Kindergarten, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12](#). Each day includes a 3-minute mindset video and then all of the materials and instructions for an engaging math activity

designed to inspire and motivate mathematical thinking.

For more information about [youcubed](#) and encouraging growth mindsets in your students, be sure to read our [Back to School Packet for Mathematics](#).



[Click here to go directly to the Toothpick Squares Talk activity for Grades 6-8!](#)

Back Pocket Questions

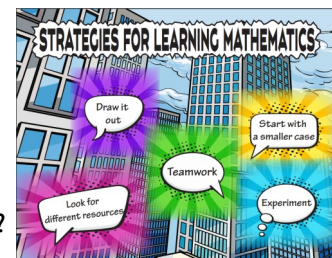
Back Pocket Questions (and statements) can be kept in your “back pocket” and used in a variety of situations. Questions are useful to differentiate—to extend students’ thinking and to help struggling students. Which of these could you post in your room to encourage students

to question each other and which will you keep to yourself to use at the appropriate time? What other questions could help establish new routines for this school year?

- How have you used this in real life?
- Show another way to answer the problem.

- Explain WHY you solved it that way.
- Explain this to a skeptic.
- What tools, resources, or strategies did you use?
- Draw a representation.

Find many more Back Pocket Questions on page 3 of the [Back to School Packet](#).



Download this free math strategies poster from [youcubed.org!](http://youcubed.org)

Detecting Pollution with Everyday Materials

In the activity Pollution Patrol, students use engineering skills to develop pollution detectors using everyday supplies. Well aligned to the engineering and earth science standards from the NGSS, this activity can take a few class periods.

Access Pollution Patrol at <http://tryengineering.org/lessons/pollutionpatrol.pdf>

Pollution Patrol
 Provided by TryEngineering - www.tryengineering.org

Lesson Focus
 This lesson focuses on devices that are used to detect air pollution. Teams of students construct outdoor air pollution detectors from everyday materials. They then test their devices to see how much particulate pollutants they can capture.

Lesson Synopsis
 The "Pollution Patrol" lesson explores how engineers design devices that can detect the presence of pollutants in the air. Students work in teams of "engineers" to design and build their own outdoor air pollution detectors out of everyday items. They then test their air pollution detectors, evaluate their results, and present to the class.

Age Levels
 8-18

Objectives
 Students will:
 + Design and build an outdoor air pollution detector
 + Test and refine their designs
 + Communicate their design process and results

Anticipated Learner Outcomes
 As a result of this lesson students will have:
 + Designed and built an outdoor air pollution detector
 + Tested and refined their designs
 + Communicated their design process and results

Lesson Activities
 In this lesson, students work in teams of "engineers" to design and build their own outdoor air pollution detectors out of everyday items. They then test their devices, evaluate their results, and present to the class.

Resources/Materials
 + Teacher Resource Documents (attached)
 + Student Worksheets (attached)
 + Student Resource Sheets (attached)

Alignment to Curriculum Frameworks
 See attached curriculum alignment sheet.

Pollution Patrol
 Developed by ISBE as part of TryEngineering
 www.tryengineering.org

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Good teachers have always known that learning doesn't happen in a tidy, straight line, but now research has given us ways to describe science learning more accurately. A key idea from that research is that in order for learning to really "stick," students need continuous opportunities to engage in scientific thinking and practices and to gradually build their understanding of how new knowledge fits with what they already know.

- Heidi Schweingruber,
Seeing Students Learn Science

The Back to School Packet for Science has been Released

Check out the resources in the science back to school packet: foundation documents, implementation guides, activities and more! These packets are an easy way to get yourself back in the groove as your school year kicks off. Find it at www.scienceteachersinaction.org

Back to School Packet: Illinois Learning Standards for Science

With the adoption of the next Generation Science Standards in 2014, educators have significant shifts to implement in their classrooms. Below are the seven primary shifts in the NGSS.

- K-12 Science Education should reflect the interconnected nature of Science as it is Practiced and Experienced in the Real World
- The Next Generation Science Standards are student performance expectations – NOT curriculum
- The Science concepts in the NGSS build coherently from K-12
- The NGSS Focus on Deeper Understanding of Content as well as Application of Content
- Science and Engineering are Integrated in the NGSS, from K-12
- The NGSS are designed to prepare students for college, career, and citizenship
- The NGSS and Common Core State Standards (English Language Arts and Mathematics) are Aligned

Classrooms in Action Science Implementation Guide

The Science Implementation Guide is a document developed for teachers, district leaders and professional learning providers to guide implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards for Science. Created with the shifts of the standards in the forefront, use this guide to reflect on classroom implementation, curriculum mapping, district wide implementation plan creation or as a starting point for school implementation activities. Access the Science Implementation Guide at www.scienceteachersinaction.org

In this packet you will find:

- Standards Foundation Documents
- Tools to implement the standards
- A standards Quick Start Guide
- Activities to engage your students

Join the Content Specialists at their New Website

Just launched, Science Teachers in Action is the new hub for the ISBE Science Content Specialists. This website has classroom, resources, implementation materials, professional learning and more. Check it out at

www.scienceteachersinaction.org

Science Teachers in Action

HOME BLOG TEACHING RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Take Your Teaching to the Next Level

Explore the science teacher network to interact with fellow educators, find classroom materials and get access to professional learning

SUBSCRIBE TO EMAIL UPDATES

Dive into Inquiry this School Year

The implementation of the Illinois Social Science Learning Standards this school year has educators looking to engage students in inquiry-based learning in order to fully implement all components of the Standards. A few quick tips to keep in mind about inquiry:

- Don't be afraid to let student questions drive learning!
- It's ok to not know all the answers — part of the inquiry process is learning *with* our students and showing them how adults

investigate topics and draw conclusions.

- The shift to an inquiry-centered social science classroom will require a reexamination and adjustment of curricular materials. The inquiry process may take longer than traditional direct instruction and therefore require schools and districts to reexamine the amount and structure of content taught at each grade level.

Searching for additional information on inquiry-based learning? Check out the [Social](#)

[Science page on Classrooms in Action](#) or the following links.

Some of these links are blogs from educators detailing their experiences while transitioning to an inquiry-based classroom:

- [Inquiry Based Learning: Wrapping My Brain Around It](#) (educator blog post)
- [What the Heck is Inquiry-Based Learning?](#) (Edutopia)
- [Student Historians: Inquiry-Based Learning in a Literacy and Social Studies Classroom](#) (AUSL blog post)

Illinois is approaching a year long celebration of its Bicentennial from December 3, 2017, to the actual 200th birthday on December 3, 2018. Check out <https://illinois200.com> for information on activities and events connected to this once-in-a-lifetime occasion!

New Opportunity to Connect with Other Illinois Educators

A new website, [Illinois Social Science in Action](#) was created with the intent to virtually support social science teachers across Illinois. With limited resources available for travel to face to face options, this site will allow teachers to virtually connect with others and share standards based ideas no matter the distance!

This site strives to bring together educators throughout the state to a welcoming platform to facilitate discussion, share ideas and provide instructional support related to the social science standards.

What do you need to do to get started? Visit the website! As you look around on the site, you will find Illinois-specific resources, a discussion forum, communication and professional learning information. Additionally, the site provides an Inquiry Spotlight

section which shares information about inquiries educators in Illinois have tried in their classrooms! Though each inquiry functions differently in different classrooms due to student interest, the hope is by sharing inquiries that have been tried we can build a base of ideas to give educators across the state a starting point about what is possible when classrooms include inquiry.

How can you get the most out of the website?

Participation is key for the site to be rich with teacher strategies. Share your thoughts in the discussion forums. Submit your classroom inquiries to the inquiry spotlight.

Share your ideas about components or features of the site that would be helpful to you. The hope is that this site can continue to evolve with suggestions and feedback.

Check out the new Illinois Social Science in Action website today at:

www.ilsocialscienceinaction.org

Illinois Social Science in Action

HOME ILLINOIS RESOURCES INQUIRY SPOTLIGHT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DISCUSSION FORUM

Welcome to the Illinois Social Science Teacher Website!

This site was created to allow Illinois Social Science Educators a place to discuss, share, question, and collaborate about social science in Illinois classrooms.

This site includes Illinois-specific information and resources. For general social science links please visit the IL Classrooms in Action Social Science page.

IL Classrooms in Action Social Science

News from the Content Specialists

Follow @ILContentSpec Follow @EHedgeKathryn



Comprehensive System of Learning Supports



"Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be."

"Kids don't learn from people they don't like."

-Rita Pierson 2013

Every Student Needs a Champion Video:

<http://bit.ly/2vFnLFI>

Check us out on the web:

[Illinois Classrooms in Action](http://www.illinoisclassroomsinaction.org)



Setting Classroom Norms

Setting classroom norms is not just about setting classroom rules to be followed by students. Norms are "an agreement among members of a classroom or school about how they will treat one another," according to Gary Borich, Professor of Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin. There are three types of norms—Safety and Health (no shoving), Moral Norms (help peers), and Discretionary Norms (clean your desk before leaving for the day).

As the school year begins educators are working on the first two stages of group norms—Forming and Storming. Forming is where students are anxious to be accepted so they behave carefully around their new classmates. Storming is when the dominant students start to lead groups of students and others are trying to figure out their roles. This could be a positive or negative "leading" by the dominant students. Holding class meetings and discussions

around what is expected within the classroom can be the best way to outline the expectations of the norms. Have students identify what would be safe and unsafe choices, how to help others, and what it means to follow the set rules. Educators must establish this as quickly as possible, but be aware that all students bring different experiences to the classroom. Attending to classroom conflicts quickly as a group will help students understand what is expected when the situation might occur again.

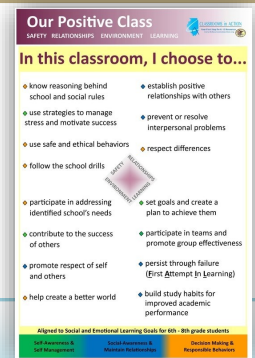
The next two stages are Norming (confident and independent) and Performing (productivity). Once past the storming stage students will become confident and independent in their actions within the classroom. They have a sense of understanding how to behave and what choices are unacceptable. When students come together to work their productivity will now increase because they have the same understanding of what is expected.

Creating a Positive Classroom Climate Resource

'Our positive class' posters were designed to support educators integration of developmentally appropriate student self-management of behavior within the four elements of positive culture and climate. (Safety, Relationships, Learning Expectations and Environment.) The reverse of these posters is offered as a blank canvas for classroom teachers and students to tailor the social and emotional learning (SEL) standard language into their own positive classroom culture and climate agreements.

Posters can be downloaded or purchased here:

<http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/sel.html>



Do You Have a "Roxanne" in Class?

Mr. Richard Curwin, educational author, wrote of a young girl named Roxanne. Her outward appearance looked like she was character from Mad Max—spiked orange/purple hair, tattoos, all black makeup and piercings. She is in high school, but think about other grade level "standouts" in classrooms. Mr. Curwin was asked, "How would you handle her?" "Talk to her", he said and so he did. He asked her a question—Are there any teachers who you listen to, follow directions, show respect and learn from?" and why? Her answer:

Because she's stupid. She thinks I can get a job someday, that I may even be able to go to college, or be a good mother because I know all the things not to do. (She started crying.)

I ain't going to college and I ain't getting a job. I'll never be a mother. I'm a dead girl. In prison when they write your name on the wall, you die, and my name is there. I know I'm going back. But that teacher believes in me, and man, it really, really matters.

Believing in our toughest students can be the key to helping out toughest students. It is not easy, or quick to achieve, but something we must show in our actions not just our words.

FIVE WAYS TO REACH OUT

1. **Stop using rewards**— this implies the need to be paid for doing something, opposite of believing.
2. **Encourage effort more than achievement** - Every student can try to do their best, not all can achieve unrealistic goals.
3. **Give second, third and fourth chances** - Mistakes are part of the learning process, not just for academics, but also for behavior. Teach them the skills to overcome their behavior choices.
4. **Don't say "you failed", say "you haven't done it yet."** - students can see hope if they know that no matter what they do, they can still do better.
5. **Increase opportunities to learn** - Children who need recess the most are the first ones to lose it. Being removed from these activities make students less able to learn how to handle social situations in the future. Students can't get better if they have no opportunity to practice.

Read the entire article here:

<http://edut.to/2vFFs7r>