

South Dakota's new content standards for English-language arts (ELA) and math feature six major shifts in each area. These shifts highlight the differences between the old and new standards. The shifts were identified for their potential to maximize student learning and prepare students for what they'll encounter in college and the workforce.

English-Language Arts

Shift #1: BALANCE

Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts. This shift isn't about making sure students can read technical manuals; it's about building integrated knowledge across grade levels beginning in a student's early years. This balance also ensures that students are ready to fully comprehend and analyze the type of material they'll be expected to read in college and the workforce.

Shift #2: DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

Students build knowledge about the world and various content areas through text rather than the teacher. This shift aims to build students' background knowledge and vocabulary, so they're able to read and fully comprehend a rich variety of texts.

Shift #3: STAIRCASE OF COMPLEXITY

Students closely read central, grade-appropriate texts around which instruction is centered. This shift ensures that students are constantly challenging themselves to improve reading levels, and provides them with the proper supports to do so.

Shift #4: TEXT-BASED RESPONSE

Students engage in rich and thoughtful evidence-based conversations about text. Students will be able to use and interpret text; students will engage in thoughtful discussion that allows them to construct meaning from a text on their own.

Shift #5: WRITING FROM SOURCES

Student writing emphasizes use of evidence from sources to inform or make an argument. This shift pushes teachers to move away from writing prompts without context, with the goal that students can work with a common body of text-based evidence more like what they might encounter in the workforce.

Shift #6: ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Students are constantly building the transferable vocabulary needed to process increasingly complex texts. Academic vocabulary increases reading comprehension and builds students' background knowledge, which means they'll be able to read increasingly complex texts. Teachers will strive to consciously use academic vocabulary in context during class discussions.

Mathematics

Shift #1: FOCUS

Teachers concentrate time and energy in the math classroom on key grade-level concepts. This focus is necessary so students can begin to develop strong foundational knowledge and deep conceptual understanding early on in their academic careers. This focus will enable students to transfer mathematical skills and understanding across concepts and grades later on.

Shift #2: COHERENCE

Learning is carefully connected within and across grade levels so students are building new understanding onto previously laid foundations. This shift will help students understand how math concepts are all connected and build upon one another, ensuring that students are comfortable taking on new concepts.

Shift #3: FLUENCY

Students acquire speed and accuracy with simple calculations through structured class time. Through mastering the predictable procedures of mathematics, students gain insights into the structure of math, and can apply appropriate procedures flexibly to solve problems correctly.

Shift #4: DEEP UNDERSTANDING

Students demonstrate a solid and thorough mastery of math concepts, smoothly operating within multiple concepts prior to moving on. Such deep conceptual understanding is critical for student success in later grades, and goes beyond isolated facts and methods, understanding why a concept is important and the context in which it is useful.

Shift #5: APPLICATION

Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply math in real-world situations at all grade levels. The process of modeling is key in improving decisions as well as linking classroom math to everyday situations. Modeling helps students choose and use appropriate math to understand situations.

Shift #6: DUAL INTENSITY

Students are intensely engaged in both authentic practice and extended application of math. Teachers create opportunities for students to make use of complex skills through extended application of math.

For more information

To watch a series of online videos about each of the content area shifts, check out The Hunt Institute on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/thehuntinstitute>. (Tip: Check out the ELA Standards and Math Standards playlists.)