Overview of content-specific guidelines

INSTRUCTION PARTNERS

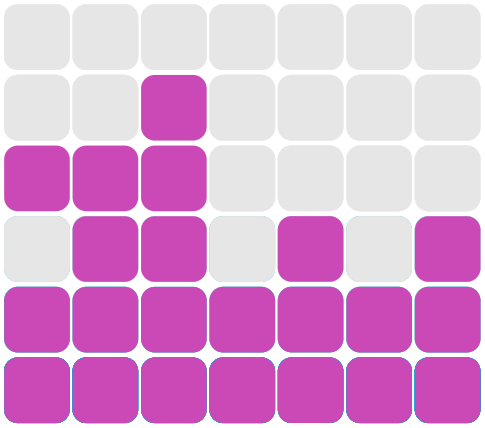
Move forward into grade-level content while embedding support for:

- load-bearing prerequisites in **math**
- fluency, vocabulary, knowledge, and syntax in **reading comprehension**
- the progression of core ideas in **science**

Continue grade-level skill progression in **reading foundations**

and

Go back to achieve proficiency on missing skills



For practical tools, templates, and recommendations for addressing widespread unfinished learning challenges, download the full toolkit.

Effectively supporting unfinished learning through Tier 1 instruction requires a nuanced understanding of both priority content as well as how children learn that particular content. Educators must understand the prerequisite skills and knowledge students need to be able to access grade-level content as well as what skills and knowledge can be taught through, or alongside, grade-level content.

We are currently engaged in on-the-ground research and creating resources for foundational reading skills, and we will share our learnings as they emerge. For now, you can review our initial findings here or watch this video walkthrough. If you are interested in partnering with us on our foundational reading work, please get in touch.

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Prioritizing content

Math

Year

- Ensure teachers have a strong understanding of the arc of the year.
- Prioritize content to create extra time for addressing unfinished learning.
- Identify the number of avail able flex days, if any.

Unit

- Understand the story of the unit/ module.
- Examine the standards in the unit to determine if any lessons can be omitted or combined, using curriculum guidance about pacing.
- Understand the load-bearing walls for the grade-level standards in that unit/module.
- Use pre-unit assessment questions aligned to those load-bearing standards to understand where students will need support.

Reading Comprehension

- Determine how long each unit/ module is designed to last.
- Determine whether Unit/Module 1 is required to establish the learning routines and procedures necessary in future units/modules.
- Consider the knowledge story for each unit/module.
- Determine whether future grade levels depend on the knowledge built in a particular unit/module in this grade level.
- Prioritize units/modules with scientific or historical text if there is no other dedicated time during the day for students to engage in this learning.
- Avoid eliminating units/modules that center argumentative writing.
- Include the units/modules with texts that maintain diversity across grade level and grade band; apply an equity lens; are rich in scientific, historical, and literary content and vocabulary; provide the necessary background knowledge for current or future learning; and/or include a standard only addressed once during the school year.

Science

- Schedule daily science instructional time for K–12 students.
- Audit and adjust curricular materials to ensure materials support students in figuring out observable, relevant phenomena rather than learning about science topics; the science ideas support students' explanation of the phenomena; and the incorporated phenomena connect to students' personal experiences, are culturally and/or community relevant, and are considered through an equity lens.
- Schedule professional learning focused on the qualities of three-dimensional science instruction rooted in high-quality materials.

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Unit/module internalization

Math

- Understand the story of the unit/module.
- Develop the concept(s) and the visual model/ representation(s) of the unit/ module.
- Determine the problem-solving strategies used in the unit/module.
- Return to the assessments to develop the visual model/ representation(s) and strategies that students may use for each assessment question.

Unfinished learning considerations

- Review student work from the pre-assessment. This reveals which load-bearing concepts and strategies students know and which will need support in order for students to be able to access the grade-level content.
- If students need support to access the grade-level content, plan to use the newly created time to support access via a bridge task, a mini lesson, or a full lesson.
- Understand the problem-solving strategies used within the unit/module.

Reading Comprehension

- Orient to the unit/module at a high level.
- Orient to the assessments at a high level.
- Select an anchor text and engage in a text chat with your colleagues.
- Determine which pedagogical strategies are needed to promote access to grade-level learning (e.g., background knowledge and fluency).

Unfinished learning considerations

- Determine the knowledge necessary to build in advance of or while reading a complex text (i.e., knowledge that the author assumes the reader already has and/or knowledge that is not provided in the text or in other texts in a unit/module but is critical to helping a reader unlock meaning).
- Gather data to determine what prior knowledge students bring to the unit/ module.
- Identify which strategies to leverage in advance of or while reading a complex text that help students build necessary background knowledge not learned through other texts in the lesson or unit/module based on background knowledge, vocabulary, syntax, and fluency.

Science

- Identify the anchoring phenomena of the unit.
- Determine the progression of science ideas that support students in explaining the phenomena.
- Make phenomena observable.
- Elicit student thinking to determine current understanding.
- Integrate tasks within units to address any gaps in understanding.
- Prioritize tasks where students engage in scientific practice.

Unfinished learning considerations

- Identify the prerequisite science ideas students need to access the grade-level content introduced in the unit.
- Listen for those ideas as students make predictions and initial explanations of the anchoring phenomena.
- When tasks need to be integrated to address foundational ideas, strive to maintain the coherence of the unit by supporting students in making explicit connections between the science ideas learned and the anchoring phenomena.

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Lesson preparation

Math

- Articulate the goal of the lesson.
- Do the work of the lesson and assessments.
- Determine the learning steps to build toward the learning goal.
- Determine the scaffolding needed to promote access to grade-level learning.

Unfinished learning considerations

- Leverage pre-unit assessment data to plan how to use the allotted extra time to support unfinished learning.

Reading Comprehension

- Articulate the goal of the lesson.
- Do the work of the lesson and assessments.
- Determine the learning steps to build toward the learning goal.
- Determine the scaffolding needed to promote access to grade-level learning (e.g., vocabulary and syntax).

Unfinished learning considerations

- Determine which words and phrases from the text are worthy of instructional attention.
- Identify which strategies to leverage to help students increase vocabulary knowledge to access grade-level text.
- Determine which, if any, sentences from the text have syntax worthy of instructional attention.
- Identify which strategies to leverage to help students untangle the syntax on complex text.

Science

- Identify the investigative phenomena of the lesson.
- Summarize the key science idea(s) students will learn.
- Determine how activities support understanding of key science idea(s).
- Determine the instructional strategies that support student engagement in scientific practice and reasoning.
- Identify formal and informal opportunities to assess student progress toward key science ideas.

Unfinished learning considerations

- Consider and attend to barriers to access, such as unfamiliar technical scientific vocabulary or lack of experience with a specific scientific practice.
- Identify strategies to support students in making sense of evidence gathered during integrated tasks and connect that learning back to the lesson's learning goal.
- Use student discussions, questions, explanations, and/or models throughout the lesson to determine whether students need additional support around foundational prerequisite ideas.

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