# Common Core State Standards: Challenges for Teachers of Students who are Visually Impaired

## [This introduction is not part of recorded webinar]

Hello everybody, we will get started in just a couple minutes. You can see people are introducing themselves in the chat window. I notice a couple of you mentioned you might need to drop off early. Thanks for letting us know. We understand your time is really precious. So I hope you are able to follow up on the recorded webinar once it’s available. We will start right at the top of the hour.

[Robin Sitten] Hello, everyone. Welcome to Perkins elearning webinar series. My name is Robin Sitten. Welcome back to Perkins elearning monthly webinar series. Today is Wednesday, January 15th, 2014. With me ago always is Phuong Nguyen at the controls. We have been on a break and we are excited to begin 2014 with a new schedule of speakers and topics. And today’s topic, Common Core State Standards, Challenges for Teachers of Students who are Visually Impaired is presented by Tara Mason, and who will be introduced shortly. Perkins elearning webinars are presented throughout the year. If you are interested in getting information about future or past webinars or teaching resources that we offer our content includes publications, e-newsletters, webcasts, online workshops and in-person training. Come to our website at <http://www.perkinselearning.org/> . I wanted to review a couple of things about the technology. You should be seeing on your screen right now the Perkins E learning welcome slide with the title. If you are not seeing the Adobe meeting room, you may have minimized your icon. Look at your status bar on the bottom and you should be able to see the Adobe bar there. You may see a screen having you how you would like to receive audio for this webinar. You can cancel that screen. We no longer use a telephone conference line for our webinars. It's improved our audio quality and reduced dropped calls a great deal. Now, that said, you do have individual controls for your screen. So you may choose to enlarge or minimize the captioning area, for example. You also have individual audio controls for your computer speakers. And part of this introduction is to give you time to make any adjustments that you need. We strongly recommend headphones or earbuds for best quality of sound, but you just want to use your individual audio to raise that.

We are using video on screen. You can see a photo of Tara there and she will be live with us shortly. At times your audio and video may appear out of sync. This is an issue of connection speed and it can be especially troublesome if you are on a wireless connection. Unfortunately, we are not able to resolve those connection sync issues. If you find that really distracting for you, you can choose to minimize or hide the video box if that out of sync is disturbing.

This event will be recorded and it will be available tomorrow on the Perkins website, including a PDF version of the slide presentation. Today's webinar will be highly interactive. So we encourage you to stay alert to the questions and response tools that will appear on your screen asking you to participate and comment. Everyone is still in listen-only mode. That helps us keep noise down to a minimum and also resolves any kind of echo or delay issues that could be difficult. You will see poll questions appear on your screen and you will be able to interact with those live.

If you preregistered for this event and you downloaded the advanced material we provided, we hope that you’ll draw from those resources in your responses. And if you haven’t had the opportunity to read all of those handouts, do not despair. We know that your personal experience and that of the young people you work with provides a great deal of background. So watch for the your thoughts icons throughout the presentation.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce today's speaker. Tara Mason is a Ph.D. candidate in special education at Texas Tech University specializing in visual impairment and assistive technology. She serves as a university supervisor of TVI debates in several states for TTU as a teaching assistant for graduate level courses and as a researcher on products related to visual impairment. Tara works with Perkins school for the blind on a gates foundation grant product regarding the math Common Core State Standards. She was previously employed as a TVI at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for several years. Tara, I am going to ask you to unpause your video and join us live and welcome to the presentation. There you are. I turn the floor over to you.

[Recorded webinar begins]

[Tara Mason] It is so nice to be here. I want to welcome everyone and I want to let you know how much I appreciate this opportunity to spend the next hour with you. So what we will be talking about today are Common Core State Standards, Challenges for Teachers and Students who are Visually Impaired. So let's get started. Alright. I know first I would like to present the webinar agenda. I like to know where I will be going, so to speak, as I settle in to learn something new. In just a moment an audience poll will pop up in your chat window so I can learn more about our webinar audience. I have already read through your comments and am excited to see so many people here today. Second, we will be dissecting the language of the standard. The standards are relatively simple as written, but we will quickly go over the nitty-gritty of how they are broken up and mapped in English Language Arts. And then, thirdly, we will be delving deeper into the challenges the standards may present for teachers in the field of visual impairment in particular. We will touch on the TVI role and testing. I will present a curriculum resource that I hope may be helpful to you as you implement the Common Core State Standards with your students that you will be leaving with today. And, of course, questions and answers.

Alright. So whenever you see that bubble your thoughts come up, that is a moment for you to participate and put your two cents in. And so if we were all in a room together doing a professional development, this would be the point where I would ask everybody to do a mixer or something. It's an opportunity to kind of stretch your legs a little bit. So I would like to find out a little more about who is here. And so we’re going to have a poll pop up. And please insert the job title that you feel like best describes you. Alright. Go ahead. A lot of TVIs, O&M, deaf-blind educators, a lot of parents. One parent so far, I am so glad you are here. Alright. Practitioners. Excellent. Special education teachers. Paraprofessionals. Great. So glad that you are here. We have a full house today. Alright, just one more second, please.

Alright. Looks like that just about covers it, and let’s move forward. Okay. So where am I? Robin gave me a nice introduction. Thank you so much, Robin. So just really quickly, I am a TVI. I also am working on my Ph.D. at Texas Tech. I also work for Perkins. The Gates Foundation project related to the math Common Core State Standards. I previously taught at the Texas School for the Blind. I was in the exit program towards the end of while I was teaching there, which is the experiences in transition program. And I currently live in Boulder, Colorado, with my husband and my two kids.

Alright. So I hope everyone saw that we have another your thoughts bubble pop up on the screen. So this is our next audience participation. It's a simple poll. And I hope everyone will go ahead and participate. I am going to read the question and then the two answer choices and then a pop-up window will come up for you to insert which you believe is true. The Common Core State Standards establish what students need to learn and they dictate how teachers should teach it. Insert yes or no in the chat window. Okay. Go ahead and bring the chat window up. Don’t be shy. Excellent, is that everyone? Alright. We can take the poll down.

Alright. So you'll see that the correct answer is no. Common Core State Standards establish a benchmark of what students need to learn but they do not dictate how teachers should teach it. We will have a couple multiple choices like this that are maybe suggesting some common myths that may be true or may not be true. I hope to take this opportunity to, you know, to tell you more about what the Common Core State Standards are.

So our next slide is our essential question. These are going to frame our discussion. They are overarching questions. I will make sure to note questions on future slides as we move through the presentation and I am going to go ahead and read them now.

What makes the Common Core State Standards different from previous state standards? What are the challenges that students with visual impairments and/or multiple impairments may face with this new set of standards? And what are the strategies that TVIs can use to ensure student success in classrooms using the new Common Core State Standards? Near the end is where we are going to get into what can we do to really help our students be more successful?

To begin our discussion, I’d like to read the quotation from the Governor’s Educational Symposium, in 2009. I think this quote helps promote a better understanding of what the impetus was for the collaborative group who created the Common Core State Standards. So I am going it read the quotation. “Recent economics studies show that high skills lead to better wages, more equitable distributions of income and substantial gains in economic productivity. Higher math performance at the end of high school translates into a 12% increase in future earnings. If the United States raised students math and science skills to globally competitive levels over the next two decades, it's GDP (gross domestic Product) would be an international 36% seventy-five years from now.”

Alright. So I hope you noticed another your thoughts pop bubble came up on the screen. What I would like everyone to do is think about one to two words related to the quote I just read. Let's all take a moment to engage with that and think about what does that mean? What does that mean for our students? What does that mean in our schools? Let's go ahead and bring up the poll. And everyone give one to two words of, you know, what did that quotation say to you? What kind of things come to mind for you? Improvement, yes. Validating information. We need quality instruction. Yes. Expectations. Increasing expectations. Employability for this population? Um-hmm. Yep. Definitely. There is a focus on employability beyond high school. Students making substantial gains. Raising the bar for our students. You guys are doing a really nice job. Learning that lasts. I like that one. That's nice. Understanding global standards. Yes. Better employment. Future independence. That's a big one. These are all things that we really focus on in our field already with the expanded core curriculum. I think it's going to be really exciting if we can put Common Core State Standards and expanded curriculum together and see what we can do to raise that level of rigor and engagement for our students. Math and wages. Yeah. that's an interesting one, isn't it? It's interesting to think about that, that if we can just hone in on math skills what that might mean for your students independent living skills. Equality for all students. That's a big one. And so, to summarize, some of the things that I really feel like pop out at me from the quotation, there is a global and equitable focus keeping up pace with industrialized nations. And ensuring students are provided rigorous and challenging standards. While everyone is kind of finishing up, if anyone else would like to add some ideas onto our poll? I want to note that the next few slides create some animations to represent the Common Core State Standards when implemented can do for our students. So I will try to describe what’s going on, on the slide. And so let's go ahead and get started. We can probably end the poll. Great job, everyone. Thank you so much.

Alright. So the other quote I chose to include comes from Colorado radio public educational coverage. It suggests there is more of an emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and collaboration. Students will be expect today apply what they have learned to real world situations. Part of the impetus is these are the kinds of skills students need in college and in the work world. These standards were benchmarked to academic standards from a number of high-achieving countries, such as Singapore and Japan.

Alright. So we have a little bubble coming down with the rocket ship and the flame has made the rocket ship fly off into the next slide. And so next we see this bubble coming down and it's moving a lever, taking it to a new location. And now our bubble comes down and our student success bubble, you could say, pours down the watering can for the metaphorical pour of water. Now, water creates plants that will grow into life-long learning, critical thinking, and problem solving. The plant is our growing student. So the Common Core State Standards is an opportunity, in my opinion, we have some good advice to work with here and it may help us as teachers in the field of visual impairment to help up the rigor for students once we understand the purpose and the language of the standards. So let's talk about that now.

Alright. I hope you noticed another your thoughts slide has come up on the screen. Please put your thinking caps on for a multiple choice question. I am going to read the question and I want you to identify which criteria you believe did not—was not involved in the development of the Common Core State Standards. Number 1, alignment with expectations for colleges and career success, number 2, realty-based for effective use in the classroom, number 3, evidence and research based, number 4, inclusion of content and the application of knowledge through the most basic, lower order thinking skills, and number 5, improvement to standards of top-performing nations. Alright. Go ahead and bring the poll up for everyone to choose. Excellent. Alright. Let’s take about 20 more seconds.

Alright. We can go ahead and pull our poll down. I see we have 81% believed that the inclusion of content in the application of knowledge to the most basic lower order thinking skills did not guide the development of the CCSS. That is correct. The Common Core State Standards, the key message is promoted throughout that the importance of higher order thinking skills. We can think back to Bloom’s Taxonomy and compare previous standards to the knowledge levels of Bloom’s which are remembering and understanding. At the very bottom, the Common Core State Standards are asking teachers to move standards to a higher level of Bloom’s such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating. We are shooting all the way up here. That is what the students are going to be expected to do. And so you could use a race metaphor and think about now how standards were at the beginning line of remembering and understanding. That might have been the finish line in previous standards. But now that's just the beginning of the race and now the finish line is going to be a much higher level of skills than just application, analyzing, and evaluating.

And you guessed it. All the other aspects that I have listed here are things that are correct about the Common Core State Standards. Expectations for college and career success, reality base for effective use in the classroom. These are all attributes of the Common Core State Standards.

Alright. So what makes the Common Core State Standards different from previous state standards? So many of the questions that come up when discussion the Common Core State Standards are missed regarding the purpose and state implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Let's go through each of these questions that frame a common myth regarding the Common Core State Standards. So were the Common Core State Standards created by the federal government? This is a very common myth. And this is one of the common misconceptions regarding the standards is concern that the Common Core State Standards were created at a federal level. The common core were created in collaboration with educational commissioners, governors, parents, and teachers in each state. So then number 2, are the Common Core State Standards only focused on students who are going to college? So the Common Core State Standards involve higher level critical thinking skills with an emphasis on career readiness and college readiness. So their focus is on each and every single one of our students. And lastly, each state has a different set of standards that are similar to each other, right? So consistency across the states, so it will not matter where a student lives. He or she will have the same benchmarks for learning at the end of each year at K-12. There are five states who have chosen not to adopt the standards and they are Nebraska, Texas, Minnesota, Alaska, and Virginia. So just to be aware of that.

Alright. So we are now going to quickly dissect the language of the Common Core State Standards so it will be easier for you to go to any standard and know what you are looking for. So the English Language Arts, and Math standards have different language describing the standard. That’s a little confusing. A quick snapshot could be this.

So the math Common Core State Standards have three parts which are domain, standard, and cluster. Think about it like this. The domain is the large overarching information that describes all the detailed information below. The standard will appear in bold text and there will be several standards for each domain at each grade level. The cluster gives examples of how a student may need to exhibit their understanding of a standard. So like in previous standards the cluster gives us a hint of possible test questions or scenarios that may be posed regarding a standard to test your student's knowledge. On the other hand, the English Common Core State Standards are essentially broken up into four major areas, reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. It appears in grade levels as the math does and the language used to describe the parts of the English Language Arts common core are strands and clusters. Okay? Everyone got that?

Alright. So let's dissect together. This slide here has a bunch of dense text taken right from the math Common Core State Standards. At the top I have listed all the standards under a particular domain in the seventh grade. The domain, remember, the overarching or idea is listed in bold font. It reads, apply and extend previous understandings of operations with fractions. So that domain seems pretty straightforward. Students need to understand fractions. That make sense? And you will see as you read the standards and clusters contained that students will be expected to have mastered the domain. Remember we may think of understanding and remembering on Bloom’s Taxonomy and then apply, analyze by the time they get to the cluster. This is where the Common Core really depart from any previous standards we saw. Some key points to take away. Domains will be the overarching idea that students will most likely need to apply. There may be several standards underneath the domain. And clusters will help you understand the complexity that is expected and may give you an idea of what your student may see on a standardized assessment.

Alright. So as for the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards, as I said, they are set up a little different than the math. They are both broken down by grade level in grades K-8. The English Language Arts continue to 9-12. The math are named high school and they have more specific content names like Statistics and Probability. The English Language Arts Common Core State Standards are broken up into four major areas, reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. The example on this slide is from the English Language Arts area of reading for grade six. The items below are the strands which give detailed information of what a student will need to be able to understand at the end of each grade level and the above example, the first strand is Key Ideas and Details. So underneath this strand will be the standard. For this first strand mentioned it’s not listed here on this slide because the slide already had so much text on it. But taken from this under Key Ideas and Details the standard is site textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. So much like the math, this standard is higher level than remembering and understanding, level one Bloom’s Taxonomy, and it provides a possible window for what your students will need to be able to do for standardized assessment. Key take aways here, English Language Arts are always divided by grade level and in four sections, reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. And the standards will be underneath the sections called strands.

Alright. I'd like to provide a concise summary of the differences between Math and the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards. Alright. So the math focuses on the concept behind the operation and the English Language Arts uses reading, writing and listening as building blocks to learn from written material. Additionally, I grabbed some information provided on the Common Core State Standard website that you have a link to this website at the end of this presentation to give us a better idea of how the standards translate to practice. I thought this was very interesting. With the emphasis on concept behind operation in math and ELA’s reading, writing, listening, as what we build on to learn, what does that mean when it’s written in the Common Core Standards? The overall, how does it all come together?

For English Language Arts there is the requirement for critical content it and stepping stones are building blocks to reading, interpreting, and understanding complex text. Some examples of complex text might be classical myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. And the ELA standards follow the National Assessment of Educational Progress , the NAEP, standards for improved reading and writing for students, K–12 . They recommend reading by the Common Core State Standards follows this pattern. Okay. So grade 4 we have 50% literary and 50% informational. Grade 8, 45% literary and 55% informational. Then in grade 12 we go 30% literary and 70% informational. So by the time our students are graduating from high school, 70% of what they are reading are factual, non-fiction primary source type documents. I think that's a very big jump from what we might have seen in previous standards movements and what we might be using in our curriculum. The recommended writing follows this pattern. So grade 4, 30% persuade, 35% explain, and 35% convey experience. We jump up to grade 12, we have 40% persuade, 40% to explain, and 20% to convey experience. By grade 12 we see a lot less personal experiences writing where students are writing about their own personal experience. I think this is very important because I know that I've used with my students plenty of times experience type stories, stories where students are doing autobiographical type stories or giving me their own opinion because they might be a hesitant writer. But we need to be making sure our students have a lot of opportunities to write about factual things where they are persuading us and explaining things to us. And by the time they get to grade 12, only 20% of their writing should be about conveying experience.

In math, the Common Core State Standards lay a solid foundation for and this is the elementary level whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, addition, fractions and decimals. In Middle School the standards call for students to practice applying more complex ways of thinking and solving real world mathematical problems. Also the inclusion of real world issues and challenges where students are being asked to think and reason mathematically. Then it just goes up from there.

So let's think about students who are college and career ready in English Language Arts, reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language. They could be described like this. They are independent. Able to build strong content knowledge. Responding to varying demands. Comprehend and critique. Value evidence. So that’s going back to the reading and where did you find that? Oh, can you cite the sentence where you found that information? You know, we're really thinking about where we saw something, where we found something and being able to defend it. Using technology and digital media. And understanding other perspectives and cultures. I'll let everyone just think about those for a moment.

So those are the ways of being an English Language Arts Common Core State Standards. And so then the students who are college and career ready in math Common Core Standards can be described as able to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable options and critique, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Let's just take a moment. I recently wanted to add to this slide that I recently watched a great Ted talk given by a math teacher Dan Meyer. He did a great way of describing what this way of being might be in a K-12 classroom. He suggested we need to develop patient problem solvers. He noted when working with students in math if you do these five things you will do a better job these promoting patient problem solvers. Using multi media, encouraging student intuition, ask the shortest question you can, let students build the problem, and then be overall less helpful. So when I think about let students build the problem, what occurs is instead of giving my students so quickly the answer when they are having trouble, they are struggling with something from their math class, instead of giving them the answer or giving them the equation, what Dan Meyer was suggesting is to help students facilitate them thinking about how they might set the equation up themselves. And so instead of me giving it to them, because that's not the way that someone who is using their intuition, it's not the way they are going to expand your thinking and use higher level critical thinking skills.

This brings us to the second essential question. What are the challenges that children with visual impairments or multiple impairments may face with this new set of standards?

The Common Core State Standards are forcing teachers to make sure we are providing opportunities for higher level creative thinking for students. For students with visual impairments we need to be especially concerned with creating opportunities for complex thinking. There are several resources provided to each of you at the end of the presentation to help access information regarding the Common Core State Standards and assessment. I know that's a really high interest area. We will talk about that a little bit. It is extremely important to plan for testing accommodations early and in fine detail. Some key considerations I want to point out. The concept behind the operation might look different for students that you work with. What to consider is how we can help our students grasp the standard and if we might be able to provide the experience lessons needed to bridge the gap that they might be feeling.

Alright. So please note we have another your thoughts slide where you will be asked to select a statement that is not true. I will read the question, and then the answer choices. Please take a moment to put your two cents in. Which statement is not true for teachers working with students with visual impairments needing to prepare students for being assessed under the new CCSS? Insert the number or numbers that are not true in the chat window. I am going to read through the answer choices. Number 1, IEP and 504 teams will continue to make recommendations for student accommodations on the new CCSS assessments. Number 2, testing accommodations and modifications are the same thing. Number 3, in 2014-2015 states that have adopted CCSS, all but five, will be required to assess student performance on Common Core State Standards in Math and English which will replace any state accountability assessments related to NCLB. And lastly, number 4, states will have up to three years to use print assessments while technology infrastructure is being implemented.

Alright. Go ahead and bring up the chat window. Please take a second to put in your thoughts. Just jump in there. About 20 more seconds, great job. Thank you, everyone, for participating.

Alright. Excellent. So accommodations are test adaptoions. And so you’re going to be able to see here that the correct answer, the one that is not true, testing accommodations and modifications are the same thing. The other items on this list are true. So accommodations are test adaptions such as screen readers or tests printed in braille, but they do not fundamentally change the target skill being assessed. This could also be changes in test setting or test presentation. So testing accommodations can be broken up into five categories. One, timing, which is extended time. Two, flexible scheduling giving more days to complete. Three, accommodated presentation materials presented in a fashion different than traditional. Four, setting, quiet room or small group. Five, response accommodation where our students might be telling us the response and we are going to write it down for them. Whereas modifications are where we are changing the target skill that the student is being assessed on. I have a good article to reference regarding this topic at the end of the presentation Ann Crawford in 2013 suggests that teachers need to first identify the target skill. And so if we were to go to the standards, that cluster that we were talking about earlier, the clusters might be where we will find that target skill that our students are going to need to be able to exhibit. And then we need to identify the access skill. So what does the student need to be able to do in order to demonstrate their ability to perform the target skill? An example may be a student needs to have an abacus and know how to use his or her scratch paper to check his or her work in order to successfully perform the target skill of correct addition and subtraction on the common core state assessment. For all grade levels students need to have enough technology access skills in order to successfully complete common core state standard assessments. So when students need accommodations in this area, IEP and 504 teams need explicit and specific accommodations listed. For students who require modified assessments the same clear IEP instructions will need be to listed and clearly represented in order to ensure student success.

Alright. So that brings us to our essential question number 3. What are the strategies that TVIs can use to ensure student success in classrooms using the new Common Core State Standards? This is the meat of it. We know we need to focus on making sure our students have the appropriate testing accommodations. What kind of things can we do to make sure our students have the access skills they need to perform the target skills and to make sure that our students are being given the opportunity to have as complex higher level thinking and any opportunity that we can provide to collaborate and expand? So let's talk about it.

So to recap, the Common Core State Standards are changing a landscape for our students in all states that have adopted them. The concept of the operation behind the problem is king versus the old way of, is this how we do something and tried and true. This is an example of this different way of thinking, this paradigm shift that has been created is when with our student comes with a math problem with we find what part is equal to when we relate it to a larger part or whole, we need to somehow explain the concept behind the confusion our student is expressing. So this is not to be confused with tutoring. We are not tutors and we are not there to explain what a proportional equation is. But instead we need to create a learning experience to accommodate what our students are not accessing through their vision or lack of vision. We might need to create a tactile model of how someone sets up a portional equation to help students visualize what is going on with the problem. Or we could provide examples that meet our students’ unique learning needs. For the next couple years there will be a computer- based Common Core State Standard testing and more information regarding accommodations will be forthcoming. You know there is still a lot of questions about what the standardized assessments will look like and there is going to be more information as these assessments are created and there is a handout about that at the end of the PowerPoint. Common Core State Standards testing will follow the recommendations provided by IEP and 504 teams. It will be important for teams to be comprehensive and detailed when making accommodations. Team members working with students with visual impairment need to thinking of what the target skill is and what access skills are needed for students to be able to demonstrate that target skill. The next piece of the pie, perhaps the biggest, is how can we help our students practice these ways of thinking? Common Core State Standards does not give teachers instructional advice. That is up to our discretion and something that the field of visual impairment needs to think deeply about. We need our students to keep up with their peers -- oops, sorry, keep up with peers with the level of rigor and higher level of thinking that the Common Core State Standards creates. And we need to help them be able to meet that challenge.

So what are some of the challenges? So this slide provides a list and during that portion of the presentation we are going to discuss some of the challenges and possible strategies. I am going to read the list on the slide. This is a technology. Tools for access skills. Ways to promote higher order thinking. Not becoming a tutor. Ensuring incorporation of expanded core curriculum and advocacy for testing, instruction, and inclusion.

So the first major challenge is twofold. The emphasis on technology is not only that tests will be computer based and some will be computer adaptive. That is the first problem. Students need to feel proficient enough in using technology and had had experiences with the test being administered on a computer. They shouldn't sit down for a standardized test on a computer and not have had that experience before in a test situation. The next problem is how do we ensure our students have enough access skills in order to perform the target skill? One example of this, which is something we can actually reinforce in our lesson, is our student needs to be able to use their assisted technology in order to go back and forth with text to find information or to answer questions. So is yourself if this is something you need to practice more with your students. Also, we can help our students take more and be more intuitive by not over helping with their lessons or over helping with their technology and in situations where they may be able to navigate with less assistance from us. How can we help put our students more in the driver’s seat? It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to advocate to implement teaching assistive technology devices for students with visual impairments. My other research area apart from the Common Core area is iPads in the field of visual impairments. The need to make sure our students are keeping up with their peers cannot be more true in the area of mobile technology. Kids as young as one and two years old with vision are playing with mom, dad or auntie’s tablet or smartphone. You may still encounter a student with visual impairment who has not been exposed to any technology. A couple of items to keep in mind. If your student is comfortable with any assistive technology it may be a access tool for computerized testing. If your student is comfortable with any assistive technology which is not a suitable access tool, he or she will be comfortable using technology. The sooner you are promoting using 21st century skills, such as using technology, like an assistive technology device for school and non-school activities the sooner your students will be doing what their sighted peers are doing. It's not uncommon to have access to their own iPod Touch de vice at the elementary level. This is crossing the previous income barriers that we would see in previous decades. When I was growing up we would not have had access to such an expensive device, which is now commonplace with kids playing on smartphones in strollers at the mall. Like never before young people are growing up in a world where everything is done online. Banking, hanging out with friends, business, shopping, you name it.

So ways to promote higher order thinking and expanded core curriculum I think go hand in hand. This may be the largest paradigm shift next in developing assistive technology plans for all of our students. When we think about ways to promote higher order thinking it requires us to think creatively to promote understanding and ability when working with our students. The role of professionals in visual impairment includes a couple of primary areas. Collaboration is key. We play a large role in ensuring that accommodations are provided in testing and classroom instruction. We need to step up the collaboration provided to students educational team to make sure that there is opportunities for higher level thinking. So some examples of best practices I have seen out in the field, I observe TVIs in classrooms and some fantastic teachers I have seen doing fantastic things. So, for example, a teacher creating a tactile science model with a student who was blind to help create a specialized skills necessary to understand the size of the planet and the different land masses of the planet and how far away they are from each other. And another example including a whiteboard tactile calendar sequence box or light to help students visualize the steps of the lesson, operation or a task. Yet another example, designing tactile models of how computer windows work. How a cursor works and what it means to place the cursor in front or back of the text. When we tell our students to select the text, what does that mean? I read a fantastic article in JVIB where a teacher went through the steps of how to do this in your classrooms. And not becoming a tutor. We are not teaching complex math concepts or complex reading concepts that we might see in ELA. But we are finding ways to help our students access the target concepts. Also, we are creating a collaborative community now more than ever. Since the level of complexity has been set so high. So when we combine the Common Core State Standards with the expanded core curriculum, how can we further extend our reach and ensure our students are successful?

As previously discussed the math standards are broken up into domains, standards, and clusters. Preceding the math domain there are eight essential standards of mathematical practice. So think of it like this. Do as the mathematicians do. This is a couple decade or more discussion in U.S. curriculum discussion to beat. Thankfully, do what the mathematics do makes sense. We want to promote the high level thinking in our students of what would a math person do. Thankfully, we have the ECC to help implement meaningful lessons that target these overarching ways of thinking. If we help our students get to the overarching way of thinking it will be easier for the entire team to emphasize the domain, standard, and the most detailed cluster levels of understanding. So in your resources I created two tables. One for math and one for English Language Arts. We’ll go to the ELA in a moment, it is set up different than the math, but let's go ahead and look at an example in math. And so right here on this table I would like to point out -- if I can bring my pointer down -- we have the standards of math practice and these eight ways of being to do as the mathematics do. Then we have our comparative expanded core curriculum area and our lesson ideas.

Alright. Let's go for an example. My comparative expanded core curriculum area, independent living skills. Lesson idea, take my student to the bank, open a checking account and use a mathematical equation to predict a proposed saving plan or something that my student might want. So what kind of questions might I ask my student to help get at some of that higher level complex thinking and to help them think as the mathematics do? I might say, how do people make money in our society? Where do people store the money that they make in our society? Say they make money at a job. I might say, Where do they store the money? Why should people store their money? They store it in a shoe box. I might say, What are the advantages and disadvantages of storing money in a shoe box? You know, hopefully always seeing the question right back on my student and helping them get to the information instead of me giving it to them. What would you do, say my student says, I will open a checking account. I would say, What would you do with your checking account. What kind of things can you do with that? Where to you find a bank to open a checking account? If my student knows needs to know what trusted people -- they can ask about bank accounts. I might say, Who are the trusted people to advise you. How would you get there? And then we might talk about some of their saving goals with the money in their account. They might say they want to save up for a computer. That's when I might get to, How can you tell how long it will take you to save up for a computer? And my student tells me whatever their answer might be, and I might help them formulate what kind of math equation could we use to make this easier next time we want to figure out this same problem? You know, so that kind of goes back to the ways of being where we're seeing regularity and we're seeing patterns, you know, I'm going to help my student kind of get at that from the back end as opposed to me giving them the information. I want them to come to me with, oh, I think I should try it this way. Oh, well, that's an interesting idea.

Alright. So English Language Arts. So just a quick overview of the table. We have right here English Language Arts standards and they have what's called anchor standards. The anchor standards in college and career readiness, they have anchor standards and reading. There is anchor standards in writing, listening, and in language. So in language and the English Language Arts standards are basically about the conventions of language. What are the rules in our language so we can express ourselves and people can understand us?

So then we have our comparative expanded core curriculum area. We have our lesson idea and then in the ELA standards we have the inclusion of technical areas of history and social studies or science and technology. Alright. So let's zoom in on this table and try an example.

So right here this is our area for reading. So our comparative expanded core curriculum area under this strand of Key Idea and Details is self-determination. Lesson idea. Current events, news reading, and email a summary of the article and how it relates to my student. So we go back to my student telling me about their experience and how it's relating to them and why they chose this article. Start there. And then we go here to inclusion of technical area. We are going to extend this lesson. We are going to have history and social studies. Compare that current event article to a topic being covered in social studies and have a student practice reading a primary source document or a document written in braille or using a screen reader. I used to do this lesson with my students. My students used to email me a summary of current events during my planning period. I would read it and I would fire off an email back to them asking them questions about it or maybe having them improve on their writing, maybe correcting some of the conventions of their writing. It was a great way that I could really be always helping them express themselves. There are a lot of other areas, self-determination, independent living skills, career skills. All of those areas all could be captured in just this one lesson that you could be doing with your students every week.

What are some of the questions I might ask to promote higher level thinking? Why do you think that people listen to the news? Why do you think they read the news? What is the purpose of learning about what's happening around the world? What topics interest you the most? How can you become more involved in that topic. What can you do to support or advocate change in said topic. A lot of times students are reading about topics they care about and they want it to be involved in them or they don't agree with them, or they fire them up and they are engaging. Let's go down to why people get involved with their community. Do you think said incident has happened before? What do you think the outcome was then? How can you find out more about the incident? And then where do people go to learn about historical topics? What are the most trustworthy websites, periodicals, or resources persons you could ask about your topic. You could get into all of that piece of the Internet where we are helping our students understand how the Internet works and what websites are trustworthy and what websites are not. Another example I thought around this current event is we have the Winter Olympics coming up and you could have a student reading about the Winter Olympics giving you a summary of an article that they read about an event and you could have them compare previous Olympics. Maybe Olympics during wartime. What did that look like? What did those games look like and how did they change?

Alright. So we're going to move on to our last audience participation. So I want everyone to take a moment to think about some -- brainstorm some ideas, lesson ideas with your colleagues. I recommend connecting the expanded core curriculum to the Common Core State Standards. Don't worry if you don't have standards in front of you to refer to. Just think about what you have learned in this presentation or what you already know about these overarching thematic ideas in the Common Core State Standards and then what you already know about the expanded core curriculum. And just take a couple minutes to write down some lesson ideas. Just one sentence. No need to write down the steps of the lesson. But, you know, how would you connect these things and use this in your role with your students?

Let's go ahead and bring up the chat window. Alright. Go ahead. Don't be shy.

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Budgeting. Trips to the grocery store. Excellent ways to combine so many areas of the expanded core curriculum. And also once you have the students taking ownership over their learning and over the activity they are getting into those more higher level ways of thinking.

Yeah, that's excellent. Using braille to review what they're learning. How to read schedules. Absolutely. Job interview. Role playing. So, so good and so important in helping students plan for those independent living skills and career readiness. Absolutely. And like when you are IDing coins by size, weight and feel, you know, always ask the student, tell me what's different about it. Tell me what is the same about it. You know, instead of giving them, you know, every single juncture have the student create the information instead of giving them I want to know more about the weight. The student is going to get there. So keep probing them with the shortest possible question. Remember Dan Meyers advice to use that short possible question and help less if we know our students can navigate it. Yeah, counting money back. Absolutely. With money, using multimedia, we have many really great apps out there on iPads to do money readers. We also have lots of different ways, you can talk to students about all different ways that people pay at the grocery store. You know, I personally with my exit students, we used cash and envelopes. But we also were branching out to using debit cards, you know, because that way I could make sure my students weren't being taken advantage of and not getting the correct change back. Structure discovery. Absolutely. That's an inherently extremely high level activity. Measuring for cooking. Um-hmm. And having -- if you see where they are coming up, they are problem solving, you know, you know you need to have this certain measurement for this recipe that you are making. So you tell me what you need to do. You know, instead of us laying it all out for them, have them start brainstorming what they are going to need do in order to be successful. School store, great. These are great ideas. And my biggest recommendation for all of these ideas, these are all the kinds of things we are doing with our students, is use the Common Core State Standards to help you plan backwards a little bit. You know, use some of those higher level ways of thinking to maybe write, you know, maybe jot down the questions that you want to ask your student to help get at the information instead of you laying it out as much for them. Excellent.

So let's go ahead and wrap up. A lot of folks are going to need to be able to go. We are just about at the top of the hour. And so thank you so much for participating. I really appreciate everyone joining in. And so this is where we're going to field some questions and comments. But before we go there, just for folks that need to go ahead and leave, I wanted to point out that there are resources here at the end. We have the Common Core Standards right here. Learnzillion.com/lessons that I found. They have a lot of lessons already laid it out for you and teachers are putting those up there every single day. The project that we are working on here at Perkins will be creating a website specific to our field much like the Paths to Literacy that is going to be a place for teachers to come and collaborate and find strategies and lesson plans. These are some of the PDF documents hopefully that you were able to download. If not, you can always look them up. This coming together right here is going to tell you everything you needed to know about what's going on with the folks that are making standardized assessment. I really liked this article from the gap. I thought it did a really nice -- sorry about that. It did a really nice job summarizing what’s going on for students that have multiple impairments and what that assessment situation is going to look like. And I wanted to thank everyone for being here. I really appreciated having this time with you. Thank you so much for your participation, and your questions and your comments.

[Robin Sitten] Thanks so much, Tara. We do have time for a couple of questions and some have been posted. If you need to drop off, we understand and we thank you all for attending. Tara, you had mentioned in an earlier slide a law that allows for print-only assessments for three years and the question was how does that reconcile with the ADA? How is that not a violation of ADA?

[Tara Mason] That's a really good point. I think that the idea behind the three years of schools being able to use -- maybe the slide isn't worded very well. I took that from that article I talked about in closing the gap. Basically, all it means is that schools are not going to be forced to have computerized testing starting next year if they just don't have the technology infrastructure. So print only means any media that you typically would have your assessments in, you can have it in that media. If that's getting at your question. It's not meant to be exclusionary. It's, instead, meant to be however you have been doing business, you can do your assessment that way and you will have three years to get your technology infrastructure. But at that point you are going to need to have technology infrastructure in order to give your tests using technology, using computers. I want it to emphasize that that's why IEP and 504 teams will still be making all of the necessary accommodations for any particular student in whatever their unique learning needs are, which might be a braille test. It's a complex issue, though, because it brings us back to the whole modifications versus accommodations since the tests are going to be, you know, are going to be potentially changing with -- depending on the user. So at that point they might not just be accommodating. They might be actually modified. So it's a tricky subject.

[Robin Sitten] Okay. Thank you. A bunch of questions about computerized testing. I'm going to give people to type them in and maybe we can cluster them together. One question we were talking about right before -- during the setup, and I'm going to tack my question on to the end of it, a listener asked why did some states opt not to adopt the state standards inmy tack on to that is can a teacher this those states decide to adopt some of these methods if they want to use them?

[Tara Mason] I don't see why not. I mean, I grew up in Texas and so I worked with the Texas School of the Bind. I am not surprised Texas decided not to adopt the standards. I can say from my analysis that the (TEKS)Texas state standards have a lot of similarities and higher level of critical thinking skills and wanting students to go from knowledge, remembering, to application. That's where the standard is going to be testing. Can they apply this knowledge? Not just do they know, you know, when the fall season is? So, yeah, I don't see why not. I think the strategies that we're developing at Perkins, the product that we are working on, I don't see why it wouldn't be applicable to all states. As for why the five states that have chosen not to adopt them, I really don't know. We could have conjectures about all different reasons why they might not have. But I don’t know. There is always political debates whenever it comes to educational reform. There is always, you know, everyone, you know, people get very fired up and feel extremely passionate about their reasoning behind their decision.

[Robin Sitten] Sure. But it also underlines you have five states opting out. It certainly emphasizes that it’s not a federal mandate. That it is a state participated mandate and the fact that five states could opt out I think proves your point. A couple of questions about computerized testing and maps and graphs. And I am going to sort of push them together. But there is a lot of variations of the question. What how is a computerized test is going to accommodate those kinds of things and do you have any information about how that tech infrastructure works?

[Tara Mason] Well, Alright. So this actually came up on a great phone call I was on with AFB around the testing and that's one of the reasons I put in that slide that more information is forthcoming. Testing are still being developed. That's number one. There are issues around maps and tables. There are issues. And there was some extremely smart people on that phone call, way smarter than me, who were bringing up issues where they had seen, you know, questions were just taken out of the test. And that is modification. That's not accommodation anymore. That's a modification where the student is not being given all the opportunity to show their knowledge of that target skill like all of their peers, right? So it's a problem. So it's a problem and I think there is going to be more information forthcoming. And that’s really our best answer next to make sure that IEP teams and 504 teams are well aware of their really, really important job here, to make sure that we have every possible accommodation. Our great detailed list of accommodations around standardized assessments we need to be involving our assistive technology people in those meetings starting today and we need to make sure that everyone sitting down at the table and deciding on what is going to be the best possible accessible material, so our students can demonstrate that target skill.

[Robin Sitten] And note takers, are those still permissible in these standardized testing as opposed to a computer?

[Tara mason] Yes, it's state by state. That’s why I mentioned on the previous slide if a student is using an accessible technology device, like a mobile device, a note taker, iPad, whatever, is that going to be an acceptable access device? I don't know. It depends on each state. Some states will have a lot of energy and action going towards making sure students have access to their own personal devices because they know how to work that screen reader. They know how to work that device. That device is what they understand and know very best. So that's what they should use in a testing situation. I could not agree more. But some states who aren't getting on the bandwagon and planning early might be having a problem come time when they really have to implement computerized testing at that three-year mark. That's one of the great things about all of us coming together in webinars like this and collaborating and talking because it's so important that everyone knows we need to advocate and start learning about the testing. We need to start making sure that we have all of our ducks in a row so our students have every possible opportunity to show their skills.

[Robin Sitten] Yeah. And here is one note that just came in. Rita, thank you. She says I am finding that current online assessments being used in her district do not interfere -- do not interface, I'm sorry, do not interface with screen readers, particularly with Jaws. So it is something that you are going to want to be aware of. You know, like you were saying, Tara, make sure that the student has tried this equipment before.

[Tara Mason] Right.

[Robin Sitten] We have to give up our meeting room. We have another group waiting to use this meeting room. There are a number of other questions. We will give them to you, Tara, and see if you can help out. I apologize for the abrupt end because we knew this was going to generate a lot of conversation. But we have to end it here. So thank you so much and we will see everyone next month.

[Tara Mason] Yeah. And please feel free to get in touch if you should need -- and I'll be more than happy to try to anticipate questions.

[Robin Sitten] Okay. Thank you. Bye, everybody.

[Tara mason] Bye. Thank you so much.

# [ Event concluded ]