

CAFE Meets Common Core

Written by: Allison Behne

The CAFE menu (Boushey & Moser, 2009) consists of literacy skills and strategies that students use to read and comprehend text. The strategies listed on the menu fall under the five pillars of reading instruction: comprehension, phonics and phonemic awareness (accuracy), fluency, and vocabulary. The original menu created in 2002 by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, the 2 Sisters, was based off of the Washington State Standards. The success of the menu in local classrooms quickly led to shared use that expanded far beyond the borders of Washington State. Since the original menu was created, it has been updated and tweaked to produce an optimal instructional tool for educators all over the world and an easy to use learning tool and visual aid for students.

In 2008, the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), along with the National Governors Association, started to look at the need for rigorous educational standards in the United States (“About the Standards”, 2011). In 2010, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy were completed to provide a means of commonality among all states and to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy upon completion of high school. These standards, along with individual state standards, provide the foundation of what our students are to learn.

While looking through the Common Core, you will notice the terminology may be different from The CAFE Menu, but the ideas are the same. Not all strategies are targeted for each grade level, but that doesn’t mean your students won’t benefit from learning them. In addition, not all Common Core standards are addressed in the CAFE menu and need to be incorporated through various focus lessons in the reading and writing curriculum. As educators, it is our job to look through our grade level standards and teach what is required at a rigorous level. It is also our job to provide our students with the strategies they need to be successful at their reading level, which may include adding strategies that aren’t specifically targeted in the Common Core.

Over the next few weeks you will find downloads of the CAFE menu aligned with the Common Core State Standards at each grade level. You will notice the menu has not changed, but instead each strategy has the number for the Common Core Standard it meets. Not all strategies will align with each grade level, and that is where you, as a skilled educator, will decide which strategies are most essential to your student’s literacy success.

References:

“About the Standards.” 2011. *Common Core State Standards Initiative*. NGA Center and CCSSO. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>.

Boushey, G., & Moser, J. (2009). *CAFE™*. Portland: Stenhouse.